Dedicated

to

The Republic of India

Preface

The Upanishads have rightly attracted general attention, but the Vedas which are admittedly their sources have remained more or less sealed books. It is true that portions of the Vedas are difficult to interpret, but fortunately there is much in them that presents no such difficulty. I have limited this anthology to such verses in the Vedas as have been clearly interpreted and have caused no serious differences of opinion between Indian and western schools of scholarship. To be on safer ground I have adopted the oriental scholars, Indian and western, as my authority, and the translation is based on their work, though in the interpretation of the religious and spiritual significance, I have received much help from the writings of Indian authors, including eminent spiritual leaders. I have attempted to keep the English version as close to the original as possible.

In writing the commentary my aim has been to indicate the poetical and spiritual content of the verses. I have not attempted any philological or anthropological study, though I have pointed out certain facts which are likely to interest the student of comparative religion.

In quoting the Vedas I have taken, as a rule, the single mantra as the unit. For this I have found my support in the Vedas themselves. The later Vedas frequently quote single mantras from the earlier. The Upanishads also follow the same method. In fact

when, after going through hundreds of verses, I selected a gem, thinking it was a fresh discovery on my part, I found, to my great surprise, that my attempt had been forestalled hundreds of years ago by the Upanishads, though the surprise was not altogether unpleasant, because it did give me considerable satisfaction to discover that my choice had the confirmation of such high authority! I have followed the Vedic practice of repeating a mantra in different contexts.

I have grouped my selections under different heads in the manner of the *Bhagavad Gita*, each representing a particular religious attitude.

I have referred the verses to the Vedas from which I quoted them, though later on I have found that some of them occur in other Vedas as well.

As the anthology is meant for the general reader the Vedic texts have been printed without the usual accent marks. In order to distinguish the translation from the commentary, I have placed the former within inverted commas.

In printing the Vedic text I have adopted a device which shows individual words in their distinctive form without breaking up the "sandhi" through which, usually, the final letter of one word is jumbled up with the initial letter of the following word, producing the impression of a long—sometimes bewilderingly long—single word. The device consists in using the complete

letter with the consonant mark instead its broken form meant for combinations, in the case of consonants, and allowing the vowel to stand in its own form instead of as a vowel *mark*, in such combinations This should not make any difference in pronunciation For Example, बृहदृतमुग्रम् is printed as बृहद् ऋतम् उग्रम् । I commend this method for the printing of Sanskrit

While presenting this little book to the public I record my obligations to the Vedic scholars, eastern and western, whom I have frequently consulted and accepted as my guide, as well as to several learned friends who have assisted me in the work Portions of the Introduction were published in the *Prabuddha Bharata* and many of the verses in the *Arya* of Kolhapur

A. C. Bose

THE VEDAS

The Rigveda	containing	10,552	mantras (verses)
The Samaveda		1 875	,
The Yajurveda (V S)	,	2 086	,
The Atharvaveda	,,	5,987	,
	Total	20 500	mantras

There are repetitions especially of a large number of Rigvedic verses in the other Vedas

ABBREVIATIONS

ऋ or Rg stands for the Rigveda and the figures following this indicate 'mandal 'sukta and 'mantra' respectively

शु य or य (वा) or Yajur stands for Shukla Yajurveda Vājaseniya Samhitā and the figures following indicate chapter and mantra respectively

अ. or Ath stands for Atharvaveda and the figures following stand for 'kānda, sukta and 'mantra, respectively

सा or Sam stands for Sāmaveda and the number indicates the sequence of the mantra

CONTENTS

WORDS FROM THE VEDAS

INTRODUCTION

I. Some Facts about the Vedic Religion

1. The Vedas

The religion and culture of Hindus are based on the *Vedas*, which no specialist, either western or eastern, has placed later than 1500 B C Some have placed them much earlier.

Except for certain non conformist cults, all religious authorities in the different ages in India have recognised the *Vedas* as the supreme religious authority. Not only this, but the texts of the four Vedic Samhitas consisting of some twenty-four thousand hymns have been regarded as the most precious religious documents from the earliest times onwards and for the last four thousand years and more have been handed down by oral tradition — a feat unequalled in the history of human civilisation. The same attention has not been paid to the Upanishads or the Epics or the works of Sanskrit classical writers.

Equally surprising is the fact that the Vedic religion should have survived through these thousands of years, inspite of great social and political upheavals and terrific onslaughts on it from age to age. A consideration of these onslaughts and of the reaction of the religion to them may throw some light on its inner power. The following are the more important religious onslaughts.

2. Onslaughts on the Vedic Religion.

(1) *The Buddhist Onslaught.* The first great onslaught was that of Buddhism, a non conformist sect of the Vedic religion which arose in the 6th century B C. It persuaded one half of India to accept the older religion in a restricted ethical sense, by renouncing ritual and metaphysics. But within a few centuries India absorbed the new sect into the parent body and little trace of

Buddhism as an independent religion was left in this country In doing so it adopted many of the new attractive features of Buddhism, like temples, image-worship etc. as also some of the ethical points, like the emphasis on non violence Hinduism (as the Vedic religion, nationalised among the people of India, has come to be called) had adopted a method of deifying eminent men (as 'avatars) and according to that Buddha himself was accepted as the ninth in a line of ten avatars

(2) *The Moslem Onslaught* Moslem sailors from Arabia were settled in Malabar by the Hindu king there in very early Moslem times Arabs invaded and conquered Sind in 711 But they could not proceed further and never reappeared as invaders Other Moslem invaders came in the 11th century and later and India was almost wholly under Moslem rule for over 500 years But the Moslem Power that had conquered and converted, almost to a man, great countries like Persia, Turkey, Egypt, Afghanistan and parts of Europe could affect the religion of the Hindus very little indeed, for after so many centuries the Moslems, including later converts, do not form even one fourth of the population to day At the end of their palmy days, early in the 18th century, before new tracts like East Bengal provided numerous converts, the Moslem percentage must have been at

the most a third of what it is now—i e about 8, including foreign immigrants Hinduism preserved itself almost miraculously against the military, social and economic pressure exerted by Islam The Vedas were preserved against the vandalism of all times by being handed down through the oral tradition Great saints arose who established religious sects (Vaishnavite and Shaivite) that were democratic in character and carried a mass appeal through the cult of devotion (*bhakti*) And Indian womanhood distinguished itself by its loyalty even when facing terrible defeat and destruction

(3) *The Christian Onslaught* Shortly after the death of the founder of Christianity missionaries were at work in different parts of Europe, and everywhere the new religion entirely supplanted the old The worship of Odin and the religion of Druids as well as Greek and Roman Paganism became completely extinct, everybody having changed over to Christianity To India there came an Apostle, St Thomas in the first century and preached in Kerala (Travancore-Cochin) But the religion did not make a headway in this country In fact after eighteen hundred years the followers of St Thomas are still confined to Kerala and even there they form hardly 30 p c of the population

Christianity came a second time to India with the Portuguese in the 16th century The Spaniards and

the Portuguese had forced their religion on the Red Indians of Central and South America. Spain forcibly converted the whole of Philippines. But Portugal could not convert the whole even of the small tract of Goa with all its inquisitorial activities. Even to day the Christians do not form a majority there.

The third wave of Christianity came with the missionaries in the British Period. Now the contest was unequal. On the Christian side were the new scientific knowledge of the modern world and the prestige that went with it; on the side of Hinduism the ignorance of the masses with hardly any leaders for them. Hinduism received a few shocks in the beginning. Some of the enlightened western-educated Hindus renounced their religion. But a strange and powerful reaction followed. Great leaders of the religion appeared and produced a feeling among the Hindus that theirs was the first and greatest religion in the world. The activities of the Christian missionaries were now limited to the poorest and most backward communities from among which they have still been effecting conversion, though the means adopted by them are not always purely religious But reformist bodies like the Arya Samaj have come into being that are trying to remove the disabilities of the backward and depressed classes and consequently to prevent conversion. It may be stated by way of contrast

stopped admitting others to its fold) No tax corresponding to the *jizia* was imposed on Moslems Even Hindu temples turned into mosques are not known to have been restored to Hinduism There are instances of great courtesy having been shown to the conquered This contrasts strongly with what the Spaniards did to the Moslems who had subjugated their country for 800 years and had been finally defeated after frequently subjecting them to the Inquisition and forced conversion they at last in 1609 gave the Moslems three days time in which to clear out of the country

Again, foreign refugees were made welcome to this land, as in the case of Jews in South India (1st century) and Parsees in Bombay Presidency (8th century) The attitude remains unchanged to this day when fresh refugees are entering India

It is this religious courtesy and the total absence of coercion in religious matters that won a high moral prestige for Hinduism

4 The Hindu Spirit among Converts

It is also interesting to note that Hindu converts to other religions have been as a rule more liberal than many followers of those religions elsewhere For example the Syrian Christians of Kerala are not known to have burnt heretics or witches; nor did the

Roman Catholic converts of Goa show any eagerness to emulate Portugal in its religious warfare *against* heretics and infidels

Similarly Moslems in India have lived amicably with Hindus, forming part of a social unit with the latter as an important factor Such fusion of Moslem and non Moslem is rare outside India and China Again there were Indian Moslems who highly specialised in arts like portrait-painting, to which the religion as practised in the country of its origin was strongly opposed Thus even where Hindus left their religion, they retained a good deal of their culture and adjusted their new religions to the ideals of that culture

From all these points of view the history of Hinduism will appear to be unique in the religious history of the world

5. Facts about Shuddhi

If we were to consider the people in India who left Hinduism in the middle ages or modern times for some other religion we would find that in many cases conversions were effected by force, through the economic pressure of taxes, and through ordinary financial inducements But more powerful than these external causes were internal causes like the ignorance of their religion among Hindus owing to the lack of religious leaders, and social disabilities of certain

backward castes (called "untouchables") The mass conversions in Sind, Kashmir and East Bengal can be directly attributed to the absence of religious teachers Had there been a saint like Ramananda or Chaitanya or Namadeva or Tukarama in these tracts, the masses there would not have changed their religion What happened to these out-lying parts of India also happened to the Hindu colonies like Malaya and Java with minor exceptions all went over to other religions *

If Christianity in modern times has made much less progress in India than it was expected to, it was due to the knowledge of the purer and higher form of Hinduism being spread among the people by modern reformist bodies It has also been found of late that wherever the knowledge of the Hindu religion has been brought, there has been a desire among converts from the religion to re enter its fold As Hinduism had shut its doors against all comers no return was possible for ages But as soon as the door was thrown open, thousands were found to flock to it for re admission This is the movement called " Shuddhi now a-days

* The same fate threatens the Hindus settled in West Indies and South America at the present time On the other hand the presence on however small a scale of enlightened elements in places like Fiji and Mauritius makes a difference in the situation

This Shuddhi is certainly surprising and is another indication of the marvellous vitality and magic of Hinduism We do not hear of such mass movements for re-admission to the original religion elsewhere Greek Christians in large bodies have not wanted to go back to Paganism nor Hebrew Christians to Judaism nor Christians, converted to Islam, to Christianity nor the forcibly converted Moslems of Spain to Islam. But in India millions of Buddhists returned to Hinduism and recently thousands of Moslems and Christians have done so All possible measures, political, administrative and diplomatic, are found necessary in modern India to prevent Hindu converts to other religions from returning to the Hindu fold Arya Samaj leaders like Swami Shraddhanand, against whom no case of unfair criticism of foreign religions is known to have been made, were martyred for their championship of the cause of such re-admission

6 The Magic of Hinduism

How to account for the magic in Hinduism? We think that the root of the whole matter lies in the imperishable truths and unconquerable spirit contained in the original documents the *Vedas*, and the noble lives lived according to high moral and spiritual ideals by generations of sages and saints, kings and commanders as well as the masses of the people True, the Vedic religion through hundreds of years has

accumulated a vast number of imperfections, but there were also proper adjustments made from age to age to meet the requirements of the time-spirit. Perhaps nowhere has the spiritual ideal of life and character been so lofty and nowhere has the approximation of practice to some of these ideals been so close, as it has been among Hindus If Hinduism is weak today it is because all her ideals have not been followed with equal persistence or sincerity The social ideal has been most neglected — caste and untouchability are now great stumbling-blocks in its way They may undo what centuries of noble effort have done

But if the Vedic religion, so disorganised and neglected could exercise such magical influence as its history shows, how much more can it do for humanity if it is truer to its noble aspirations and ideals!

II The Vedic Religion and Orientalists

It is usual to consider the *Vedas* from the philological, anthropological and sociological points of view Sufficient attention does not appear to have been paid to the fact that they have been the basis of a religion that has been followed by hundreds of millions of people for thousands of years

There are several difficulties in the way of a real religious study of the material The invaluable commentaries of Indian scholars like Śayana have one grave

defect : that in respect of the religion they speak in terms of their own age and are therefore anachronistic. It was the indefatigable labour of the great orientalists that discovered new ways of interpreting the Vedas, but in understanding their interpretation of the religion, we have to take note of a few facts that are likely to have influenced their judgment in an adverse manner Most of these scholars were Europeans And these European scholars of the nineteenth century had certain prepossess ons which must have made it very difficult for them to arrive at an objective view of the Vedic religion

1. Christian Monotheism

First, most of them were devout Christians, attached to particular churches Now these churches had one common tenet, viz. that the worship of the true God was limited to Christianity alone and heathens and infidels, by whatever name they called the object of their worship, were not worshipping God, but something else In the middle ages Christians held the belief that heathens worshipped the devil Later there was some liberality, but only to the extent of believing that they worshipped stocks and stones and other natural objects

The difference between the "monotheism" of Christians and the so called "polytheism" or "pantheism" of Pagans was a fundamental one Monotheism stood for belief in a God in heaven, surrounded by angels and

archangels, seraphim and cherubim, who was the sole monarch of the universe and whose will was law. Those who obeyed His will (communicated to mankind through His prophets) were sent after death to an eternal heaven and those who disobeyed it were in peril of eternal hell fire and could be redeemed only by the special intercession of the Saviour, the Son of God. For one born and systematically brought up in this creed, it was next to impossible to believe that the people who offered their worship to the Dawn or to the Sun or to an abstract and neuter Brahman or "That Existence" [Tat Sat] could ever be worshipping God.

Again, for Christianity this world was a halting place in the pilgrimage of the soul to heaven. Here it was surrounded by false attractions of the earth. True religion was to be dead to the life of the flesh and awake to the eternal life of the soul. How could one accepting this view of life think highly of the ways of Paganism—of the Pagan joy of life, the Pagan raptures at the glory of the earth and the sky, the Pagan blending of the material and the spiritual and the Pagan humanism—the exaltation of man and of human affections and aspirations?

Indian Paganism had one or two special points about it which widened the gulf of difference between it and Christianity. In the descriptions of the Divinity, it caused much confusion to the Christian thinker by

mixing up all sorts of conceptions For example, in the same breath it described the Divine as "Father and Mother,' as "Father, Kinsman, Brother, Friend for ever,' as "Bosom friend," as "the most endeared Guest," as a "youthful Friend" whose friendship kept one "ever young" Not only this, He was as "husband to the wife," as "a lover of maidens," like a "chaste wife beloved of her husband."

The conception of the Divinity as feminine, though not far removed from Roman Catholic Christianity, was a strange idea for Protestant churches. How could a man possibly worship the Divinity by addressing his prayer to a Goddess described as a "white robed Maiden," "like a Bride decorated by the mother"?

Again to the orientalist, the "polytheism" of the Vedas was most baffling because the deities are never definitely individualised, they do not even form an Olympic synod where every god and goddess has a well-defined, concrete personality Can one ever imagine Jupiter being "father as well as mother" or Jupiter being Apollo, and Apollo and Mercury Jupiter himself? Again, will anybody expect Apollo, Mercury, Jupiter and the whole host of the divinities to be described as a mere *It* or *That* or as a Divine *Existence*? But all these happen in the case of Vedic Deities. For example, Agni is identified with Varuna [illegible], and with Varuna and Mitra (R.V.

VII 12 3) In Indra are Mitra, Varuna and Pushan (R V VI 24 5) ' That One Existence the sages call in many ways—as Agni, Yama Matarishwan, says the Veda (R V I 14 46)

2 Christian Ethics

Another vital difference between Christianity and Indian Paganism' was in respect of the ethical standard Christianity had popularised the ethical doctrine of surrender to evil, of turning the other cheek when one has been smitten of loving the enemy This was accepted as the highest morality Hence the further one went from this in respect of the ethical standard the more degraded one was But all forms of Paganism have the roots of their ethics in *the heroic ideal Indian Paganism took its stand on* Truth and Order both as cosmic principles and as ethical laws of life In the latter case it required all the energy and valour of which man was capable to be applied to the task of making truth and order prevail against falsehood and license in other words of ng goodness prevail over evil The conflict ere but it was this severity that inspired epic heroism So according to Vedic Paganism there could be no compromise with evil it must be fought strenuously and relentlessly The most important of the Vedic Deities, Indra symbolises this heroic ideal Now, to the typical Christian, all the fire and fury

associated with heroism is the mark of a barbarous state of existence Some orientalists, however, have gone to the extent of recognising Varuna, described as the King of the Universe (other Deities also are so described) whose noose gets hold of every sinner and whose emissaries roam over the earth, as the ethical Deity, even as *the Ultimate Reality* But the true Christian with his notion of "the highest ethics" could not find himself well disposed towards the Hero-God Indra to whom many of the grandest Vedic hymns are addressed

3. The Victorian Theory of Progress

The theological prepossessions of the orientalist were reinforced by scientific theories of the later nineteenth century Chief among these was the doctrine of *social evolution and progress*, popularised by Herbert Spencer, which, however, had no real scientific connection with Darwins theory of biological evolution According to the theory of progress, the world was getting more and more perfect as time passed on hence things in the past were imperfect in proportion to their distance from the present time This provided the orientalists with a ready assumption that the Vedic age being extremely remote must have been in an extremely crude stage of civilisation It was not till recently that this facile theory of progress was repudiated and among other things it was established

repudiated and among other things it was established that in matters of art and the spiritual side of life, there has been no progress for the last hundreds of years. This new corrective, however, does not appear to have affected oriental studies.

4. Philology and Anthropology

The nineteenth century was an age of science and the sciences that chiefly interested the orientalist were philology and anthropology. It was the practice in those days to trace the words of literature to their roots. The practice was quite good in so far as it applied to words of which the meaning was known. But when unknown words were traced to real or imaginary roots and their meaning discovered, there was often in evidence a dogmatism worse than that of religion. Similar was the attitude in anthropology. The explanation of features of life in terms of the crudest possible theory of their first origin became the rule of the day. The orientalists often let themselves go in this respect to lengths far outstripping the legitimate laws of their science.

Having presumed that the Vedas belong to primitive times, orientalists have expressed learned opinions about their defects as primitive poetry. For example, Cowell says, "*The poetry of the Rigveda is singularly deficient in that simplicity and natural pathos or sublimity which we naturally look for in the songs of an*

5. Victorian Certitude

Last, but not the least, was *the Victorian certitude* that marked the temper of the thinkers of the later nineteenth century, including the average oriental scholar He did not seem to have any mental reservation in anything, nor to have doubted the accuracy of his conclusions to any the least extent We find the more intellectually conscientious orientalists of today confessing to an absolute absence of finality with regard to most of the theories held about the Vedas on the basis of philological interpretation But with Victorian orientalists things stood in absolute certainty of truth

6. Legitimate Indian Sources of Interpretation.

It is true that Indians themselves could not be of much use in oriental research They derived their ideas about the Vedas from commentary written at least three thousand years after they had been composed The religion that they practised was a later form of 'Paganism," complete in all individual particulars and, distinct from the Vedic type in many fundamental respects including the conception of the Divinity And it will not be wrong to believe that the very backward conditions in which Indian masses were found to live and their political subjugation tended to prejudice the case of their ancestors in the eyes of the western observers.

Now in order to make an attempt to understand the Vedic view of life as a religion that has vitally affected the lives of hundreds of millions of people, we should approach the orientalists in a critical spirit. Their researches can never be ignored in Vedic studies, but sufficient allowance must be made for their strange prepossessions. And the evidence of genuine Indian authorities in respect of the trend of religious thought should by no means be set aside. In this sense, the later Vedas will provide useful commentary on the earlier, so will later developments of the Vedic religion in the Upanishads, in Buddhism, in the Bhagavata cult, in the Yoga cult etc., provide valuable material for the interpretation of the Vedic religion, even where they do not agree with the Vedic stand point.

III Monotheism and Polytheism

1. Two Thought-patterns

To the philosopher monotheism and polytheism may mean just the belief in one God and many Gods, respectively but in relation to practical religion to which the terms apply, they mean much more than this. It is customary to think that monotheism is superior to polytheism. The theory of progress has led to the belief that polytheism perfects itself into monotheism by a process of growth. But a close examination of the cults will show that the claim of superiority is based on

assumptions not acceptable to all It will appear that the difference between them is not that of the degree of perfection, but of method They represent two distinct patterns of thought

2. Aspects of Monotheism

Let us consider some of the salient aspects of these patterns *First*, monotheism is the belief in a single Divine Person But this is only a partial description of the cult Some think that it is the oneness alone that matters But it is not so For instance one who thinks of the Divine as an impersonal Essence is not a monotheist in the technical sense of the term Those who quote the famous Rigvedic verse that says that "*The One Being the sages call by many names,* do not sufficiently realise that here 'the One Being (एकं सद्)' is in the neuter, standing for the Divine Existence and not for a Divine Individual and hence is not the same as contemplated by the well known creeds that describe themselves as monotheistic To the monotheistic creeds *God is a Person and not a metaphysical Essence*

Secondly as a Person the monotheistic Divinity cannot be conceived in any way one likes For example, one who accepts a Single Divinity as Mother or Maiden is not a monotheist in the practical sense of the term To the monotheist the Divinity is not only a Single Person but also a Masculine Person *Thus the distinction between polytheism and monotheism is not one of number alone but of gender also*

Thirdly, a monotheistic God cannot be any kind of Male Person He can only be a Father One would not be a monotheist if one were to think of the Divine as Brother or any other relation

Supposing "Agni" in the following verse means the Ultimate Being, He would not be the typical monotheistic God because the relations in which He stands to man are more than one

अग्नि मन्य पितरम् अग्निम् आपिम्
अग्निं भ्रातर सदमित् सखायम् । ऋ ७।७।३

'Agni I deem my Father, my Kinsman,
I deem Him my Brother, my Friend for ever'

In other words, the monotheistic God is not only a single Person and a male Person, but *He stands in a single relationship to man—in that of Father*

Fourthly, a point already involved in the foregoing is that the monotheistic God cannot be imagined to be of any age Being a Father, He cannot be contemplated, say, as a Child Even as Father He cannot be believed as youthful He is a very elderly Person *not only a Father but a Patriarch*

Fifthly, as a Person the monotheistic God cannot exist anywhere, He has His special abode—heaven He is a Father who is in heaven He may go wherever He likes, but heaven is His place of residence

Perhaps the most essential difference between monotheism and polytheism lies here that *monotheism*

contemplates the Divine in heaven and polytheism contemplates the Divine in the universe

This makes a difference in the entire conception of life and religion To the monotheist heaven represents a superior plane of existence and God a superior order of reality To that order belong angels and archangels cherubim and seraphim who also live on that plane According to this cult while heaven is sacred, the universe is profane while God and the angels who live in heaven are holy man and other mortals on the earth are sinful while God is great man is small

Polytheism finds the Divine in the universe and hence there is but a thin dividing line between the sacred and the profane the human and the Divine the mortal and the immortal In fact polytheism contemplates heaven on earth and God in nature and in the heart of man

Hence while polytheism is attached to the earth and thinks in terms of life and the joy of living, monotheism is attached to a hereafter and lives for heaven looking down upon earthly things This trait of polytheism has been called Paganism

Sixthly, monotheism is not a simple belief in a God in heaven who is a Father Its God a Patriarch, is a *Ruler He is the King of Heaven And from heaven He* also rules over the universe as its sole Monarch Thus *monotheism is monarchical theism*

Hence the ideology of monotheism is the ideology of monarchy Heaven is the royal abode The King is in His throne He has his servants and emissaries He appoints His vicegerents He takes the best of His subjects to His heavenly court The worst of them are flung into the dark prison house, Hell

As King, He claims unstinted allegiance and homage The subjects must offer their respects often enough and regularly enough to satisfy His royal position They must bow and bend before Him and thus honour and exalt Him They must stand in dread of Him

And as the only King He is jealous of usurpers and rivals He alone should receive the homage and no other To offer homage to any but the God of Heaven is to be a traitor to the Kingdom of God No wonder that ideal subjects of the Kingdom have thought that nothing can please the King better than the punishment of those who try to offer their honour and homage to persons or objects other than the God of Heaven

Seventhly, the monotheistic God has His perpetual Adversary or Enemy—Satan, who is a sort of Anti-God Hence there is rivalry between God and Satan for the possession of the universe. Men are in constant risk of going over to God's Enemy and God's wrath is directed against them when they are suspected of having done so

Eighthly, as monotheism centres in a Monarch, who is an absolute Ruler, the chief thing for His subjects is to know His will The Divine Will is the only guide for man in his conduct on the earth. How to know the will of God? He sends His messengers (Prophets) on earth to make His will known to mankind. Those men are virtuous who bow to His will and make it prevail on earth as in heaven Those are sinners who disobey or defy His will or—it comes to that—the prophet who conveys the will to mankind

Religion, here, is the exercise by man of his own will to force himself to obey the Will of God.

Polytheism, on the other hand, conceives fundamental ethical and cosmic principles to which the divine nature conforms The Vedas, for example, lay down Truth (सत्य) and Order or Justice (ऋत) as such principles One can realise God by realising the operation of Truth and Order in the Universe "The holy Law's commandments make me mighty", says the Deity revealing Himself to the sage [R. V VIII 100 4] God is the "Protector of the Law". He has, according to this conception, no arbitrary will. We may say that He cannot will what is unjust or evil So the worshipper must follow truth and law (धर्म).

3 Polytheism: Two Types

a) Popular Polytheism or Multitheism

What is Polytheism ?

There are two broad types of Polytheism which must be distinguished each from the other One is popular or anthropomorphic polytheism which finds many Gods instead of just the One of monotheism in heaven It believes in a synod or assembly of Gods, each being a well defined individual possessing a character of his own, and each distinguished from the others by sex, special attributes and sometimes even age The only difference between monotheism and popular polytheism is that in the latter the divine power is not centralised in one person and hence the divine government is olygarchic instead of monarchical We may call it Multitheism

Here one God or Goddess may be invoked against another and the evil points in one may be counter balanced by the good points in another.

Again, a monotheist stands or falls by one God a polytheist having several may change one God for another if the former fails to satisfy him Thus for a monotheist the only alternative to his faith is heresy or atheism, but for a polytheist the alternative is not the negation of God, but the search of a better and greater God

Such was the polytheism of Egypt and Greece and Rome and such has been, with certain differences, the polytheism in the Indian Puranas

(b) Higher Polytheism or Unitheism

But there is a higher polytheism which is not anthropomorphic but pantheistic Here the Divinities are not individualised or particularised They do not live in a heaven nor do they form an assembly They hardly exist as well defined individuals One of them is easily *identified with another Here one Deity is not* worshipped to counteract the influence of another On the contrary one is readily substituted for another The Deity in this system of thought may be spoken of as one as two, as many, or many in one or one in many, may be spoken of again either as masculine or feminine or neuter Such is the polytheism if such should be the name, found in the Vedas and in the higher type of the Puranik religion in India Max Muller coined the term "Henotheism' for this cult We should like to call it "Unitheism

4 Aspects of Polytheism

Polytheism has some common characteristics, *irrespective of the type it represents though in the* higher form there are subtleties not found in the popular type

First, polytheism is *poetic theism* It approaches the divine idea through poetry Hence it delights in the glory of form and colour, it touches the whole gamut of human emotions from the sublime to the tender *It includes the aesthetic as an essential factor*

and at the end of that period that creativity reasserted itself, bringing about a revolution in the intellectual and spiritual life of Europe and a rebirth (Renaissance) of man

In monotheism on the other hand, instead of creative vitality, a dead fixity of form leading to stern orthodoxy and dogmatism contributed to the preservation of the creed

Thus while polytheism has owed its continued existence to flexibility and the capacity for change and adjustment, monotheism has derived much strength from bigotry and fanaticism, distinguishing itself by the ruthless persecution and destruction of heretics and infidels

The difference here is what M Arnold discovered between Hebraism and Hellenism Monotheism is characterised by "strictness of conscience" or severe conformity, and Polytheism by "spontaneity of consciousness" or independent perception and expression

Sixthly, polytheism, the reaction of the free poetic soul to the aesthetic appeal of the universe, makes *imagination* the chief vehicle of expression Hence it deals in concrete imagery which is representational, suggestive, and symbolical Whereas monotheism, the firm discipline of the will leading to the acceptance of definite articles of faith, including chiefly a belief in heaven and a God in heaven, thinks in terms of *facts* It is literal in its geographical and historical con

ption. Its heaven is a place like any place on rth: to the monotheist there in so figure of eech or symbolism about it God is a person like y human person God's creation of the earth is an istorical event that can be definitely dated So is the irth of the Son of God according to monotheistic hristianity. No true Christian has attempted to inter-ret the birth of Christ or Virgin Motherhood as a mere gure of speech or symbol.

Thus while polytheism flies on the wings of imagination, monotheism is pinned down to facts. Disbelieve one of the facts and the whole structure of monotheism falls to pieces. If Jesus of Nazareth is not accepted as the Son of God or Moses or Mahomet as a Prophet of God, then the whole bottom out of their religions will be taken away But polytheism will remain unaffected by considerations of fact and history. It makes no claim to historicity it has nothing to do with facts and dates Hence it has no quarrel with science, just as poetry has none For example, if Darwin's theory of evolution is accepted then the whole doctrine of creation as given in the Christian Bible will fall through and the religion itself will face annihilation But not so in the case of polytheism If, for example, Darwinism opposes some creation theory in some Purana, it will have no effect on the religion, because the Purana is not understood literally and historically; it is taken imaginatively and [illegible]

IV Vedic Henotheism The Cult of the One in Many

There is a certain religious attitude which one comes across in different ages, and which is typical of the religion as found in the Vedas—the most ancient poetry of the world and the earliest and most characteristic expression of the spiritual idealism of the Aryan type of civilization—to which Max Müller gave the name Henotheism Henotheism resembles monotheism in that it describes the Divinity as One. It resembles polytheism in that it contemplates the Divine as a God, or a Goddess, and Gods and Goddesses named by it are many. Often several are named together. But the Deity is not the same as in Semitic monotheisms, nor are the different Gods and Goddesses so well defined and individualized as in polytheistic cults

Henotheism, as a religious creed, differs both from monotheism and polytheism It differs from monotheism in that, though it believes in One God, it finds that this belief does not affect its contemplation of many Gods

The speciality of Henotheism lies in this that there is a general devotional attitude towards the Divine, and this attitude remains unchanged even if the Deities addressed are changed.

Not only this, but by clear statement the different Deities are identified with *One Deity* (*e g*. with *Agni*) or as the One Divine (*ekam*). And in such identification

the difference of number or gender is ignored Thus Henotheism is the worship of the One Divinity in many names and forms

'Heno' is Greek for 'one' 'Henotheism means the belief in One God but as its features are different from monotheism where 'mono also means one, the new term has been coined The Vedic expression for the One Divinity is '*ekam*' which has been spoken of as Advaita ('not two) So we may describe Henotheism as 'Advaitist Theism' and distinguish it from the general Advaitist philosophy which tries to prove the unity not of God only, but of all orders of reality

Two essential aspects of Henotheism arrest our attention

First, the subjective aspect If we consider the attitude of the worshipper the cult appears to be monotheistic, in the philosophical sense Every Vedic prayer is born in a spiritual mood, a praying attitude, in which the mind receives the vision of the Divine This attitude and this feeling remain constant, though the contents of the vision vary This psychological factor provides the point of unity

Secondly, the objective aspect If we were to ignore the subjective feeling and contemplate the multiplicity of forms, the cult would look like simple polytheism Hence observed externally, in relation to the form, the Vedic cult would appear polytheistic except for the

amorphous character of the Deities. It is usual nowadays to describe it as polytheism. The description, as a purely formal one, is not quite inaccurate. But it loses sight of the spirit, and it is the spirit which is its chief point and which gives the cult its characteristic speciality.

Considering the spirit we find that one important difference between Vedic Henotheism and polytheism is that Vedic Deities do not combine in their character virtue and vice, goodness and evil like polytheistic Gods and Goddesses. All of them are good. Each represents the highest moral standard conceivable by the poet.

Not only is there no moral defect, but there is no aesthetic defect either, in the Vedic Deities. No Vedic God or Goddess is *deformed or* decrepit. All are beautiful and noble.

Here we find the secret of the identification of one Deity with another. In form the Deities are many, but in spirit they are one. This is the basis of Henotheism as a religious cult.

THE AESTHETIC FACTOR

In the Vedas each vision of the Divinity carries an aesthetic value for it is a vision of beauty and splendour. As a religious attitude it is what the Bhagvad Gita calls ' Vibhuti Yoga '—the path of splendour. The typical form of the splendour is light (Jyoti, Bhargas) and in the more abstract sense, glory

(Mahiman), greatness (Mahas) as well as loveliness (Sri), *beauty* (*Vapus*), *wonder* (*Shravas*) *etc* According to this outlook the Divinity is Deva, 'the shining one' or 'the glorious one' Thus the conception of Divinity becomes primarily a generic idea, and secondarily the idea of an individual deity Hence there is no essential contradiction in indentifying one specific deity with another, so long as the generic idea remains constant

The Ethical Factor

The Vedic deity embodies the ethical value as much as the aesthetic There are two basic terms in the Vedas indicating their ethical value—Satya (truth) and Rita (eternal order, discipline of eternal law, goodness) It may be said that there can be no god or goddess in the Vedas who does not represent the *conceptions of Satya (truth) and Rita (eternal order).*

God is Satya Dharman, 'one for whom truth is the law of Being,' Satya Sava, 'one for whom truth is the source of power,' Satyasya Sunu 'son of truth, and so on, and finally He is 'the truth'—Satyam or in the metaphysical sense, Sat, reality Similarly God is Ritavan, upholder of eternal order, and goddess Ritavari protectress of eternal law, and a deity is, in the abstract, Ritam—eternal order, truth

This takes, theism to some fundamentals which can be contemplated as ends in themselves without reference

to a Divinity. Hence Vedic theism is based on an elementary moral standard which, as in the case of Buddhism, may be upheld in a non theistic way too So in India it is not the atheist who is really objectionable, but the person who repudiates moral law (Dharma) The earth, according to the Vedas, is upheld not by the will of a God, but by truth (Satya)[1] of which God is the supreme exponent Similarly the Veda says that God reveals Himself through Rita (order, truth)[2]

God is supreme because He represents not only the beauty and splendour of Nature but also all virtue, all goodness, all nobility in man and woman at its highest (This is another form of Vibhuti Yoga) So, in the Vedic prayers, there are descriptive terms for the Divinity which are in the superlative form, though the deities named are different Thus, whether in one name or another, the Divinity in the Vedas has been spoken of as the supreme poet (Kavitama), the supreme hero (Viratama), as the supremely beneficent (Shantama), etc; similarly as the supreme father (Pitritama), the supreme mother (Matritama), and so on. Now, to an intellectual man, the superlative can imply only one individual, hence when two deities are described by the same superlative, the implication is that they are the same. For example, when Agni and Brahmanaspati are both spoken of as Vipratama, the supreme sage,

1 *Rig Veda*, X 85 1
2 " VIII 100 4

then, as the superlative adjective indicates one person, so Agni and Brahmanaspati are one divine Being by implication

THE METAPHYSICAL FACTOR ONE ESSENCE

The Oneness of the Divine, implied through the *psychological and ethical factors, is also presented in* the Veda as a definite metaphysical proposition It is clearly stated that 'the One Being the sages contemplate *in many ways*—*Ekam shantam bahudha kalpayanti* (*Rig Veda*, X 114 5) . Sometimes it is said that all gods are one in Indra (e g, *Rig Veda* III 54 17) or in Agni (*Rig Veda*, II 1), and sometimes one God is described as All God (Vishva Deva). The following well known verse sets down the henotheistic principle in clear language

> They speak of Indra Mitra Varuna Agni and there are the divine Suparna and Garutmat The One Being the wise call by many names (Ekam sad vipra bahudha vadanti) as Agni Yama Matarishvan (*Rig Veda* I 164 46)

But here, as a close *observation will show the* conception of the Divine becomes metaphysical, because the Divinity is spoken of in the neuter as One Being (Ekam sat) This method is not casual it has been *frequently used in the Vedas and is, in fact, the* metaphysical foundation of Vedic theism The idea does not occur only in the first and tenth cycles of the *Rig Veda* (supposed to be later) but elsewhere too The following occurs in *Rig Veda*, III. 54 8 'One All

(9)

Approaching the Divine through the Joy of Soul

अग्निं मन्द्रं पुरुप्रियं
शीरं पावकशोचिषम् ।
हृद्भिर्मन्द्रेभिरीमहे ॥ ऋ ८-४३-३१

"We worship with joyous hearts the joyous Deity, dear to all, effulgent, holy, purifying." (Rig viii. 43 31)

There is a sacredness in our highest joy, corresponding to the infinite joy in the Divine. Hence a medium of approach to the Divine is the joy of the soul.

The conception of the joy of a stainless soul seeking the stainless joy of the Divine is typically Aryan. According to it man is not borne down under the burden of sin His is not a worship in penitence It is the opening of the flood gates of a joyous soul before the radiant glory of the Source of all joy.

Vedic poetry is typical of this joyous out pouring of a lofty spirit. The Vedic hymns have been rightly compared in the Veda itself to streams gushing out of mountains:

गिरिभ्रजो नोर्मयो मदन्तो ।
बृहस्पतिमभ्यर्का अनावन् ॥ ऋ. १०।६८।१

"Like merry streamlets bursting from the mountain, to Brihaspati our hymns have sounded."

'Apas' (waters) are That, Prajapati is That' (*Shveta. Up.* VIII, 27).

In another Yajur Veda verse (32 8) the Divinity is spoken of in the neuter as Tat Sat (That Being) in the first line, and as the Lord (Vibhu) in the masculine in the second. Here is the Advaitic theism of the Vedas. The unity of God does not mean that there is only one individual in the species called God, but that the Divinity is supreme and all-pervading and all reality becomes unified in Him. "Yatra vishvam bhavatye-kanidam"—'In whom all find one nest' (*Yajur Veda*, 32 8) This Advaita includes monotheism in the simple philosophical sense; as for example the *Sama Veda* says—

Come, ye all, with your spiritual might (Ojas), together to the Lord of glory (Div), the only One, who indeed, is the Guest of men, He is the First, to Him who desires us, all pathways turn. He is in truth, the only One (*Sama Veda*, 372)

The *Atharva Veda* (XIII) puts the idea arithmetically

To him who knows this God simply as One
Neither second nor third nor fourth is He called;
(Nor fifth nor sixth nor seventh etc)
He oversees all—what breathes and what breathes not,
To Him goes the conquering power.

But the idea takes a more comprehensive turn with what follows—

He is the One, the One alone,
In him all deities become One alone

Here philosophical monotheism develops into henotheism. Monotheism understands One God, One ruling over all, but beyond it lies the conception of henotheism—of the One in many, and the many in the One: this is Vedic Advaita.

Philosophers, by the application of logic, may try to reduce the proposition to simple monism—that the One is real and the many unreal, but the Vedic Advaita is much more than monism, it lies beyond the logic of monism. *It takes its stand on a mystical experience* in which the One is real and the many too are real, and the many find their unity in the One.

Those who accept mysticism can alone penetrate into the conception of the One in the many—as in the following:

> Aditi is the sky, Aditi the mid region,
> Aditi the mother, the father, the son,
> Aditi all deities, the five-classed men,
> Aditi is all that is born, all that will be born.
>
> (*Rig Veda* I 89 10)

Here is a conception that goes beyond time and space. In the following the logical sense of quantity is superseded:

> And both the seas are in Varuna's loins
> And He lies in this small drop of water.
>
> (*Atharva Veda* IV 16 3)

The all pervasiveness of the One is poetically conceived not only in the cosmic world but also in the

world of man The following is addressed to Brahman, the neuter term for the Divinity

> Thou art man Thou art woman Thou art the boy
> Thou the maiden
> Thou art the old man tottering with the staff
> Thou existest on all side*
>
> (*Atharva Veda* X 8 27)

The Veda has not, to any the least extent ignored the individual vision of the Divine—whether in the masculine or the feminine or the neuter, whether in the singular, the dual, or the plural Hence it has maintained the poetry of particular experiences Agni is the One existence—Ekam—but he is *contemplated in the* masculine so Ushas though one (Ekam), is contemplated in the feminine as in the following

> One (*Ekah* mas) is *Agni kindled in* many a place One (Ekah mas) is Surya shining over all
>
> One (Eka fem) is Ushas illumining all this That which is One (Ekam neuter) has become This All (Sarvam neuter)
>
> (*Rig Veda* VIII 58 2)

This is the way of poetry and of mysticism The theism of it is only the intellectual interpretation We call it henotheism in the absence of a better name available in English

THE RITUALISTIC FACTOR ONE SINGLE RITE

The Vedic ritual (Yajna) is in keeping with its henotheistic character Unlike the polytheistic or fetishistic ritual, it is one *uniform ceremonial without*

reference to the deity worshipped Whatever the deity worshipped, the ritual is the same The same oblation or libation is offered, though, in the accompanying prayer, one or many gods may be mentioned

One important difference from the ritualistic point of view between Vedic henotheism and polytheism is this: that henotheism has made poetry and music alone its media of expression, † whereas, polytheism has used plastic arts including sculpture Sculpture so thoroughly particularizes a deity that the logical anomaly of identifying one deity with another becomes a formidable difficulty here For example, the masculine Agni and Surya and the feminine Ushas are spoken of as Ekam—One, in the neuter. In visual arts such identification cannot be effected Hence Vedic henotheism, inasmuch as it substitutes one deity for another and identifies all deities with One Essence (in the neuter gender) cannot possibly fix the deities into definite plastic forms

Vedic deities are visions, but formless They have received embodiment only in the poetry of the Vedas When we read of Ushas—'the daughter of the sky,'

† cf *Rig Veda* X 71 11 'One plies his task by reciting the verses One sings the sacred hymn in Sakvari measures

One, the man of wisdom speaks of the knowledge of the existing things, and one lays down the *rules of Yajna*'

Here four methods of religious practice are mentioned recitation, singing the path of knowledge and Yajna

'like the bride decked by her mother,' the last thing we should do is to imagine the female figure of a deity concealed somewhere in the sky, who appears on occa sions to mortals whom she favours This is polytheism and this is where Vedic Advaita or henotheism differs from polytheism §

The Social Factor

The social grouping of the Veda is in accordance with its principle of unity in diversity It recognizes the division of society into four types—the man of

§ Some of the images in Vedic poetry are not capable of being reduced to difinite forms For example the famous des cription of Purusha—the Cosmic Person—as 'thousand headed, thousand-eyed thousand footed' is not the description of a figure because, for one thing the Vedas do not entertain the grotesque—all gods are beautiful for another, the super subtle Vedic poet should *not be supposed to be imagining an equal number of heads and eyes* (*The emendation of Atharva Veda here changing 'thousand headed into thousand handed was unnecessary because the Rig Veda did not conceive a form*)

Similarly, the description of Indra as both father and mother can lead in the case of sculpture to only an artistic freak like 'Ardhanarishvara' which will be repugnant to the Vedic spirit Similarly the sculptural representation of the Vedic symbol for the ultimate—Suparna—the beautiful winged (bird)—will destroy its poetry and philosophy and leave in its place mere totemism ! Similar will be the case with descriptions of the Divinity as Vrisha—the bull or Varaha—the boar terms that indicate nobility and greatness

knowledge and religion (Brahmin), the man of politics and warfare (Kshatriya), the man of trade and industry (Vaishya), and the working man (Shudra), but it says that all of them are limbs of the Cosmic Being: that they are respectively the mouth, arms, thighs, and feet of Purusha. This means in philosophical language, that the Shudra, the Vaishya, the Kshatriya, and the Brahmin, though separated by quality and occupation, are the same in spirit. This is another instance of the many in One. It is social Advaita.

Equally interesting is the social application of the principle of Vedic henotheism in respect of members of other religions. The hymn to the Earth in the *Atharva Veda* recognizes the variety of men and creeds on the earth. Janam bibhriti bahudha vivachasam nanadharmanam prithvi yathaukasam—'The earth that bears people speaking varied language, with various religious rites (Dharma) according to the places of abode' (*Atharva Veda*, XII 1 45)

We find the antithesis between Arya and Dasa or Dasyu in the Vedas but the antithesis is stated as one *between enlightenment and ignorance, goodness and* wickedness, lawful life and lawlessness. The Veda, unlike Buddhism, preaches open battle against all forces of evil. Indra, the supreme Being, is also supreme as a fighter against evil—he is described as Vritrahantama, the supreme among killers of Vritra, the power of darkness. But no question of the 'infidel' is raised by

the idea. On the other hand, it is stated that the enemy, whether our kin or a foreigner, should be valiantly opposed (*Rig Veda* VI. 75.19) The evil-doer from the ranks of the forward-marching people must be eliminated (*Rig Veda*, X 53.9) It is also said that God is the God of Dasa as well as of Arya—Yasyayam vishva arya dasah shevadhipa arih—'Lord God of glory is He to whom both Arya and Dasa belong' (*Rig Veda*, VIII. 51.1) There is a prayer for the forgiveness of sins against the foreigner (*Riga Veda*, V. 85 7)

The *Atharva Veda* says God is of the foreigner (Videshya) as much as of our own land (Samdeshya) (IV 16 8)

So the principle of unity in diversity covers all human relations.

There are Mantras which extend this principle to all living beings (Sarvani Bhutani) (*Yajur Veda*, 36.18) till at last we come to a grand *conception of universal* peace and serenity—the harmony with Nature (Sarvam Shantih) (*Yajur Veda*, 36 17)

Thus it will be found that Vedic henotheism or Advaitic theism is not a casual creed, it is comprehensive *in its application to life* People worshipped deities of their own. Polytheism synthesized them into a pluralistic pantheon in which every deity was recognized as divine, with, of course, qualitative differences So Roman polytheism absorbed Greek and Egyptian gods within its religious creed. Hindu polytheism absorbed

different kinds of gods and goddesses of different sects and tribes But something different and subtler and grander had been done ages *before them by* Vedic Aryans *They accepted all the different deities that were worshipped, but synthesized them as manifestations of One Divinity,* so that any one of them could be indentified with any other or all the rest Only a mind of the highest subtlety and accustomed to the mystical apprehension of reality could be conceived to be capable of this In the following verses (out of many) which occur in the beginning of the second cycle of *Rig Veda*, an ideal of religious synthesis was set up, which only the greatest saints and sages of the world in the long after ages have been able to grasp The poet worships the deity Agni, but he finds that there are other deities, male and female, like Indra, Varuna, and so on, which other sages have worshipped He says

Thou O Agni ! art Indra the Hero of heroes
Thou art Vishnu of the mighty stride, adorable
Thou O Brahmanaspati art Brahman who knows
power,
Thou O Sustainer tendest us with wisdom (3)
Thou, O Agni art King Varuna whose laws stand fast
Thou as Mitra, wonder worker art adorable
Thou art Aryaman Lord of heroes ene rel ng all
O Thou God ! Thou liberal Ansha in the synod (4)
Thou, God Agni art Aditi to the offerer of oblation
Thou Hotra Bharati, art glorified by the song
For conferring power Thou art the hundred wintered Ila
Thou Lord of wealth, art Vritra slayer and Sarasvati, (11)
(*Rig Veda*, II 1)

Some Orientalists have held the opinion that in the Vedas there is really nothing like henotheism, that is simply polytheism; only, owing to the peculiar primitive mentality of the worshipper, every deity is flattered as the Supreme Deity. But the term henotheism should not imply merely the description of every deity as the Supreme Deity, it *must also account for the identification of one deity with another, or of one deity with all the rest as in the above quoted passage, or of one deity or all deities* with the abstract divine essence, in the neuter form. Is there anything like this in polytheism? Can you speak of Apollo as Hermes, or of Hera as Athene, or of Apollo as *Zeus*, Hermes, Hera and Athene? Never has polytheism, ancient or modern, spoken in the manner of the Veda, of the One in the Many and the Many in the One.

Henotheism In Post Vedic Ages

The henotheistic cult, though a speciality of the Vedas, is found in later ages too. For example, we find a number of medieval sages in India preaching this idea in their own way that God is one, though called by different people in different ways. Ordinarily, it is toleration of other people's gods. But the Vedic sage's *attitude is not simply one of toleration*, but of acceptance and *it is not only the acceptance of another's God with* the hospitality of polytheism, *but acceptance of all gods*

imagined by all other sages as identical *with one's own*—the one Deity without a second

We read about Sri Ramakrishna that part of his religious experience was the contemplation of the Divinity according to the conception to different sects and religions Here we find, in our times, a religious phenomenon of the same type as Vedic henotheism of contemplating the Divine not only in terms of one s own God but of everybody else's God

Thus henotheism, in its Vedic sence, is not a simple religious theory, but part of a deep *spiritual experience*.

The working of the henotheistic principle is found in the synthetic part of the Avatar theory that all Avatars are incarnations of the same deity. The result of this is the resolution of age long sectarian differences Rama and Parashurama were Kshatrija and Brahmin heroes in opposition, but in the melting-pot of Avatar theology both are incarnations of Vishnu Even Buddha the rebel against Brahminism, became, by this process, an Avatar, and hence the conflict of ages was *attempted* to be composed not by simple toleration but by acceptance This is the way—though a popular way—of henotheism or Advaitic theism

The success of henotheism as a religious cult will depend on the fulfilment of the essential conditions including the principles enumerated above: (1) that the worshipper must bring a pure, prayerful mind; (2)

that whatever deity he entertains should be conceived in terms of truth, goodness, and beauty, (3) that the metaphysical basis of unity in diversity should be securely established, (4) that the ritual should be in keeping with the idea of unity, and (5) that the unity should not remain a mere abstract idea but must find a concrete form in terms of social life, both internal and international Henotheism, therefore, can apply only to highly cultured concepts of religion.

CONCLUSION

From our examination of the different religious concepts regarding the Divinity we come to the conclusion that there are different attitudes that one religion could take up in respect of another One is that of monotheism with its exclusive claim of its God as the only God then there is the method of accumulation followed by polytheism, in which all types of deities imagined at different times by different people are entertained and fostered and allowed to exercise whatever influence they can on the religious life of the people, and finally there is the method of spiritual synthesis adopted by henotheism, in which there is no mere toleration, no mere hospitality to the other's God, but acceptance of the other s God as one's own and as the One Divinity. This last is logically puzzling, but it has been part of the mystic experience of great sages and saints of all times

Thus while polytheism is a federation of different grades of theism, monotheism, in its accepted religious sense, carries the imperialistic challenge of one social group against all other groups But a plurality of monotheisms, by its very logic, creates a situation in which constant conflict is the rule of life The remedy for this lies in henotheism—the acceptance of one another's God as the One Divinity and trying to perfect the knowledge of That through spiritual effort and mystical experience This henotheistic or Advaitic theism has worked as a powerful force in the spiritual life of India, though in its comprehensive form it is a special feature of the Vedas.

V Some Basic Principles of the Vedic Religion

It may be said of the different religious sects originating in India that the thing that matters most with them is not so much what one believes as how one behaves, not so much the intellectual acceptance as the moral conduct and the spiritual build The basis of religion, then, is the moral law with spiritual discipline guiding life The common term for this law and this discipline is Dharma, a word cognate with *form* in English. Dharma is the ideal form of conduct

Vedic theism presupposes the existence of Dharman (an older form of the term), meaning, the eternal Law. For example, it is said of Vishnu that ' He upholds the eternal statutes (Dharmani)' (*Rg* I, 22. 18). Agni

has been described as the 'President of eternal laws'—Adhyaksha dharmaṇām (*Rg* VIII 43 24) The *Atharva Veda* speaks of the earth as 'upheld by *Dharman*—eternal law' *Ath.* XII. 1. 17).

The *Mahabharata* wants to give the root meaning of the word Dharma. It says

'Because it upholds, it is called Dharma, Dharma upholds the creation'

(*Karnaparva*, 69 59)

Lord Buddha popularized the term in its Pali form, Dhamma, signifying eternal moral principles, unconnected with, and independent of, *one's faith in the divinity*

Thus *Dharma stands for the fundamentals of* religion, the ideal form of conduct that was accepted as the foundation of right living by all religious orders in ancient India, whether theistic, atheistic, or agnostic *The contents of Dharma are more or less taken for* granted by the people from tradition or from the general outlook of a particular religious order Latter day leaders of religion, have, as a rule, defined their concepts in detail. *It would be interesting to* find a comprehensive definition of Dharma in early religious literature—of the basic principles that are believed to uphold society.

Such a definition of the contents of Dharma—of what upholds the earth—is found in the *Atharva Veda*

(though the word Dharma has not been used in the passage),

सत्यं बृहद् ऋतम् उग्रं दीक्षा तपो ।
ब्रह्म यज्ञ. पृथिवीं धारयन्ति

'Truth, Eternal Order that is great and stern, consecration, austerity, prayer and ritual—these uphold the earth' *Ath*. XII. 1 1)

These six, then according to the Vedic ideal are the fundamentals of religion Let us consider them

1 *Truth*

It is important to note that the Veda places truth first and ritual last in religion This is not without its special significance, for in every age in the history of the Vedic religion ungrudging supremacy has been conceded to truth, and there is nothing in that religion like articles of faith In every age the problem has been to find out *truth* and not to stick to *belief* Every period of Indian history has had its sage and seeker afer truth and the sincerity and freedom of their minds have *been* responsible for the maintenance of the philosophical outlook

In the Vedas truth has been described as the essence of divinity. '*Savitā satyadharmā* The Deity has truth as the law of His being,' says the *Atharva Veda* (*Ath* VII. 24 1). The *Rig Veda* calls the Deities manifestations of truth

'the three and thirty Deities the manifestations of Truth, saw You Two (Asvins) approach Truth (*Rg* VIII 57 2)

Elsewhere in the *Rig Veda* the Deity has been described as true (*Rg* I 1 5 I 29 1) Ultimately, *in religion*, as understood in ancient India, it is not so much a question of theism and atheism as it is one of truth and untruth

'Let us worship Indra the True (*satya*) and not untruth (*anrita*)' (*Rg* VIII 62 12) A sage defends himself by saying that he did not make untruth (*anrita*) his gods (*Rg* VII 104 14)

Prayer and ritual of the right type come out of a truthful life and true heart The libation of Soma flows—'speaking truth, truthful in action'—satyam vadan *satyakarman* (*Rg* IX 113 4) *The path of* religious progress is the path of truth An Upanishadic sage says

By truth is the divine path laid out
by which sages, having obtained
what they desire
ascend the supreme abode of Truth

(*Mundaka Up* III 1 6)

The Atman he says, is to be realized through truth—*satyena labhyah* (*Mundaka Up.* III 1. 5) And with supreme confidence he declares

सत्यम् एव जयते नानृतम्

It is Truth alone that conquers and not untruth *Mundaka* Up III. 1 6)

Truth in its moral sense is truthfulness, integrity, in a metaphysical sense it signifies reality, and Satya becomes Sat Satya applies to conduct Sat is an object of search of knowledge or realization and vision Hence the Upanishadic prayer 'Lead me from unreality (*asat*) to reality (*sat*) (*Brihadaranyaka*, I 3 28) But Sat as a metaphysical entity is abstruse and mystical Sometimes a sage makes a modest inquiry

'*Unknowing I ask of those who*
know—the sages—
as one ignorant for the sake of knowledge
What was that One in the form of
the Unborn? (*Rg* I 164 6)

The question persists even in worship

'Who is God whom we shall worship with our oblation? (*Rg* X 121)

The sage of the *Yajur Veda* records his vision of Sat, in which the universe is united as birds in a nest (Y. VS 32 8) Sage to sage the *knowledge* passes like the information about an unknown land from traveller to traveller

One ignorant of the land asks of one
who knows it,
he travels forward, instructed by the
knowing one (*Rg* X 32 7)

A traveller who has yet a long way to go may, with just modesty, remain silent about '*Sat*, the Reality One may even adopt with Buddha the attitude of reserve regarding the ultimate Reality But with Satya, truth, it is different Satya is our concern at every moment of life The Vedic sage has contemplated a state beyond Sat and Asat, reality and unreality "Then (at the beginning) there was neither unreality (asat) nor reality (sat) (Rg. X. 129. 1) But one cannot contemplate a state when there is no truth Truth as a value of life is abiding and ultimate. By truth is the earth upheld, says the *Rig Veda* (*Rg* X 85 1, also *Ath* XIV, 1, 1) ' Quicken truth '—Satyam jinwa—says the *Yajur Veda* A sage of the Upanishad begins his spiritual disquisition by asserting ' Satyam Vadishyāmi, ' I will speak the truth

2 *Order* (*Rita*)

(a) The ethic aspect of Order

The first essential of Dharma, then, is Truth. The second is *Rita*, Eternal Order, Eternal Law The word is obsolete in modern times, but its negative *anrita* (*Rg* I 105 6), meaning, literally, disorder or chaos, has been used from ancient times as the negative of truth In its moral aspect Rita is often synonymous with truth So 'Ritam vadishyāmi , ' I will speak the Eternal Law ' and ' Satyam vadishyāmi ', ' I will speak the truth ', mean practically the same thing ' *Rita and Satya* ' are spoken of by the *Rig Veda* as being

' born in the beginning of things out of perfect spiritual ardour'. (*Rg* X. 110 1) As Satya upholds the earth, so does Rita uphold the heavens. (*Rg* X. 85 1.). In *the offering* of the Soma libation the sage speaks of Soma as ' declaring Law (Rita), splendid by Law (Rita), truth-speaking, truthful in action (*Rg*. IX 113 4). We must praise " Eternal Order " (Ritam samasantah) and think in a straight way (*Rg* X 66. 2)

Rita, in its moral aspects, however, is wider than truth, it includes justice and goodness and is almost synonymous with Dharma as an ethical concept. So Rita is opposed to evil, and the opposition is severe, therefore it is spoken of as ' stern and fierce ' (*ugram*) It has been said ' The wicked tread not the *path of* Eternal Law ' (Rita) (*Rg* IX 73 6)

The following is addressed to Brihaspati, who rides the awful car of Rita, destroying evil

' Having chased the wicked ones and
darkness
Thou mountest Thy refulgent car of
order (Rita)
The awful car, O Brihaspati that
subdues the foe,
Slays the wicked, cleaves the stall and
bring the light ' (*Rg* II, 23 3)

(b) Rita as Cosmic Order,

Rita, like Satya, forms an essential part of the conception of the divinity A god is 'Ritāvan,' a goddess 'Ritāvari', Guardian of the Law Here *Rita* has a wider implication than morality, it stands for cosmic order, for the immutable law of nature, by which the universe becomes systematized and integrated and avoids chaos and confusion Gods chant the song of Rita,' says the Veda (*Rg* I 147, 1) In one verse the divinity is identified with Rita. (*Rg* IV 40 5, also *Y. VS* X. 24). As on the moral plane Rita leads to the triumph of goodness over evil, so on the cosmic plane it leads to the triumph of light over darkness It is said of Indra that—

'He, shining, caused to shine what shone not.
by Law (Rita) he lighted up the dawns
He moves with steeds yoked by Eternal
Order (Rita)
making man happy by the chariot nave
that finds the light (*Rg* VI, 39 4)

There is, then a coordination between natural law and moral law Good life, which is life lived according to Rita as moral Law is cognate with the cosmic law governing nature 'We will follow the path of goodness like the sun and the moon, says a Rig Vedic sage Happiness comes from treading this path. 'Lead us beyond all pain and grief,' so runs the prayer, 'along the path of eternal law (Rita)' (*Rg* X 133).

The man of faith is really one who has understood and accepted the Eternal Law (Rita), and the atheist is one who does not believe in the eternal values, and does not stand for goodness and oppose evil, according to eternal law Vritra whom Indra destroys is the power of darkness and evil who obstructs the working of Rita The Dasa and Dasyu are 'followers of different statutes inhuman (*anya vrata amanausha*) (Rg X 22 8 VIII 70 11) What is revelation but the awareness of the working of eternal Law in nature and life ?

One and another say There is no Indra Who has seen him ? Whom shall we worship ?

I exist O singer ! Look at me here All that exists I surpass in grandeur The commandants of eternal Law (Rita) make me mighty When I rend I rend the worlds asunder (Rg VIII 100 3 4)

The sceptic who complains of not having seen Indra is asked to see him *here* (*iha*)—in the universe itself through the splendour and the order emanating from the working of the Law and the severity of the moral rule

(c) The aesthetic aspect of Rita

Rita that reduces chaos to cosmos, and gives order and integration to matter also gives it symmetry and harmony Hence the concept on of Rita has an aesthetic content too it implies splendour and beauty For

example, when in obedience to Law the rains break, the 'fountains' that 'bubbling, stream forward' are 'young virgins skilled in Law' (*Rg*. IV. 19. 7). Nature becomes beautiful through conformity to Law. The lovely Dawn (Ushas) 'true to Eternal Order,' is 'sublime by Law' (*Rg*. V 80. 1); 'the youthful Maiden breaks not the laws of Eternal Order by coming day to day to her tryst' (*Rg*. I. 123. 9)

So Rita that holds together the cosmos through natural law is the discipline of life through moral law; and it is also the discipline of form that makes beauty

'Firm seated are Eternal Law's foundations,
In its fair form are many splendid
beauties' (*Rg*. IV. 23 9.)

It is for this reason that the Vedic gods upholding Rita are all lawful, and beautiful and good. Their beauty is a significant attribute Terms implying beauty like Sri (beauty, splendour), Bhargas (glory), Vapus (beautiful form), Vama (lovely), Charu (beautiful), Chitra (wonderful) are frequently used for the Deities

In the following verse there is a vision of Agni as the beautiful *One*

'O wonderful One, O Lord of wonders!
Give us what is most wonderful,
life-giving.
O bright One, with Thy brightness,
give to Thy singer

great wealth, brilliant, with many
heroes (*Rg* VI 6 7)

Similarly, Varuna represents the beautiful form (rūpa) that lies behind the cosmic order

'He, the supporter of the world of life
who knows the secret names of the
beams of the dawn
He, Poet (Kavi), cherishes manifold
forms (rūpa) by his poetic
power (Kāvya)' (*Rg* VIII 41 5)

Of Indra it is said that He is beautiful as the heaven to look on' and is 'an active dancer' who attracts by beauty (Sri) (*Rg* VI 29 3)

The beauty created by Indra through the application of cosmic order is spoken of in the following *verses*

'Thou who by Eternal Law (Dharman)
hast spread about flowering
and seed bearing plants, and streams
of water,
Thou who hast generated the matchless
lightning in the sky
Thou vast, *encompassing vast realms*
art a fit subject for our song'
(*Rg* II 13 7)

The aesthetic approach to reality illustrates the highest refinement of the mind and the finest culture And what delicate moral impressions on character must

be produced by the representation of the beauty and charm of young womanhood in terms of divine grace and holiness! On every sensitive mind the imagery must imprint itself in all its sacredness and sublimate the conception of womanhood beyond anything that moral exhortations and prohibitions can achieve We assist at visions of Ushas as 'the noble lady' (*Rg* I. 48 5) as one 'who goes like a maiden in pride of beauty, smiling, youthful, brightly shining' (*Rg* 1. 123 10), as one 'who is lovely as a bride adorned by her mother' (*Rg*. I 123 11), as the beauty who 'as if conscious of her bright limbs after bathing stands erect, desiring, as it were, that we should see her (*Rg* V 80 5), as 'the Daughter of the sky, bending opposite to men like a virtuous maiden (*Rg* V 80 6), as one 'who like a dancer enrobes herself with her embroidered garments' (*Rg* I 92 4), as the Maiden who 'bending down, clothed in a red form, is seen advancing as one wonderful (*Rg* VIII 101 13) and as the Goddess, the bringer of light, whom poets welcome with the singing of hymns' (*Rg* V 80 1), To Ushas, the Maiden, the poets wish to be 'as sons to the mother' (*Rg* VII 81 4)

The beauty of Ushas is the beauty of the maiden, the beauty of Saraswati is that of the mother. And not only has the woman s loveliness been enshrined in the portraiture of the Goddess, but it has also been called up through simile or metaphor to illustrate divine

attributes There are fine vignettes of mother and child in the references to ' the mother bending to feed her child ' (*Rg* II 33 10), of ' the mother kissing her child and the child returning the kiss ' (*Rg* X 114 4), of ' babes in arms reposing on their mother ' (*Rg* VII. 43, 3), of ' playful children, whose mothers are handsome : ' sśula na krilavah sumātarāh ' (*Rg* X 78 6) *

By revealing the beauty that lies at the core of the cosmic order (*Rg* IV 23 9), the Vedic sages uplifted the mind of man to unimaginable heights And in a way that only very modern minds can properly understand, he hold on the aesthetic also stabilized the fundamentalst of character and moral living more durably than mere moral preaching can do One who learnt to admire the divine beauty of the woman did not need the ordinary social taboos to keep him straight in his moral character For the woman also there is not much by way of exhortation to virtue but beautiful pictures present the ideal for all times For example, speaking of the purity of the Deity, the sage says that He is ' like the irreproachable wife beloved of her husband ' (*Rg* I 73 3) So, in the eyes of the Veda there is divine purity in the chaste wife loved by her husband

In a succession of verses Savita is implored to ' send far away all evil,' and ' send what is good ' then

* The following calls up a picture of father and child
' I grasp Thy garment s hem as a child
grasps his father s (*Rg* III 53 2)

he is asked to grant 'all things that are beautiful,' and then he is spoken of as one 'Whose power is in truth' (*Rg* V 82 5 7) Thus the Deity is understood in terms of goodness, beauty and truth—the three ultimate values Usha, the beautiful One, 'obedient to the reins of Order (Rita), is implored to send 'thoughts that are more and more blissful' (*Rg* I 123 13) Thus beauty, an aspect of Rita as cosmic law, is, so to speak, only the obverse of Rita as moral law So form as beauty (Rūpa) and form as morality (Dharma) are harmonized by the contemplation of a universal (Brihat) order (Rita)

(d) Rita as Rite

The term Rita has also been applied to the Vedic ritual It has been observed that Rita is *rite* as well as *right* As a ritual Rita signifies the orderly performance of the ceremonial part of the worship which is a complicated form of acting, and therefore possesses the attributes of art So like the aesthetic form the form of the Yajna also conforms to laws of order And the order observed at the ritual is a symbol of Eternal Order, including the eternal statutes of moral life The material for the ritual, Soma juices, is invoked in the following words

'O Purifiers !
driving off the lawless looking at the light
Sit in the place of the sacred rite
(Rita)' (*Rg* VIII 13 9)

'Let not the licentious enter the place of worship,' (*rita*) says another verse (*Rg* VII 21 5) The Soma libations flowing 'in streams of Rita,' are asked 'to glorify the Deity as they make the whole world noble (*Arya*) and drive away the lawless' (*Rg* IX 63. 5) Rita uplifts the spirit

'*Ascending* the lofty heights of Order (Rita) the bands of singers sip the sweets of immortality, (*Rg* X 123 3)

The earth is sweet to the man who lives by Law (Ritāyate) (*Rg* I 90 6 8)

It is interesting to note that while Rita as cosmic and moral law is understood to be immutable and eternal Rita as ritual is expected to vary with time and to be renewed to suit the human desire for change 'Navyo javatam ritam let the new ritual grow' (*Rg* I 105 15)

(e) Rita as Social Order

In the Vedas every god or goddess is spoken of as the protector of Rita the cosmic order More particularly certain Deities are described as Kings who are guardians of Rita and as Kshatriyas—protectors and rulers Mitra and Varuna have been spoken of as such

> Upholders of Eternal Order (Rita)
>
> Powerful, They have sat them down for sovereignty (sāmrajya)
>
> Rulers (Kshatriyas) whose laws *stand fast*

'They have obtained Their sway (Kshatra) (*Rg.* VIII. 25 8).

The emissaries of Varuna, 'upholders of Eternal Law,' 'survey both the worlds,' and 'inspire the praise songs of noble minded poets' (*Rg* VII. 87. 3). The sinner is caught in the noose of Varuna

The earthly king makes Mitra and Varuna his models. Like them he wants to be an upholder of order (Rita) as applied to social life; he therefore, calls himself a Kshatriya In the *Yajur Veda* the king while receiving consecration is told

'Thou art Mitra, Thou art Varuna'
(*V' VS.* X 16)

The Kshatriya is not only a protector, but, being a defender, is also a fighter. The Deity who represents the ideal of the fighter as well as the giver of law, is typically Indra In Him the spirit of Kshatra finds its widest application

'Great art Thou, mighty Lord, through valour,
obtaining wealth, O fierce One conquering the foes;
Thyself alone the king of the whole universe,
Such as Thou art, Thou causest battle and peace'
(*Rg* I 154 4)

'I deem Thee, Indra, as the Banner of heroes.' sings the sage, 'I deem Thee as the Chief of the people' (*Rg.* VIII 96 4)

There is a stirring call to the people to be heroes after the manner of Indra

इन्द्रम् सखाय अनुवीरयध्वम्

(ऋ. १०।१०८।१, शा. ३३५)

'Comrades, quit you like heroes after the example of Indra' 'Heaven and earth bow before Him before His might the mountains tremble' (*Rg* II 12 13) A great hero, He is also merciful But His grace comes out of His might

शवसा दक्षिणावान्—' graceful through power '
(*Rg* VI 29 3)

In Soma who has also been described as king the ideal of *Dakshinā* or *grace* has found fine expression

' He clothes all those who are naked (nagna)
He doctors all those who are diseased ;
The blind man sees the cripple walks '
(*Rg* VIII 79 2)

Vishnu, 'the Upholder of eternal statutes (Dharmāni), the Herdsman (Gopā)' (*Rg* II 22 18) is also a typical representative of the ideal of royal and divine grace There are His 'three places, filled with sweetness, and imperishable joy with holy bliss (*swasti*) (*Rg* I 154 4)

The earthly king becomes a Kshatriya protector, by applying his Kshatra ruling power to society, as the Divine Kings apply their ruling power to the universe in accordance with Rita [1]

1 The ancient Persian king's name Artexerxes is believed to be the same as Ritakshatra

Rita and Fate.

The ideal of society is to translate the order (Rita) of the cosmos into social order Like the Greek conception of Fate, Rita does not derive its power from the will of the gods, but lies above divinity But the Greeks found in Fate a power which even the gods could not withstand, which was arbitrary, and which foreordained the course of mortal life beyond the capacity of anybody to alter it. This led to the typical Greek conception of Tragedy that man was a helpless victim of Fate In India, however, Rita never became foreordination , it remained Eternal Law and Eternal Justice As a result, however, of the working of Eternal Justice there could be, no escape from the consequences of our deeds a man must reap as he sows So the conception of stern Rita led to the doctrine of Karma With the detailed acceptance of the doctrine of rebirth, every soul was believed to be born with the residue of Karma of previous births (praktana) which, remaining unseen (adrishta), guided man's present life to happiness or misery according to Eternal Justice Thus India too came near the Greek idea of predeterminism But this was in later ages In the Vedas there is no predeterminism. There is confident faith in man's capacity to follow the Rita in making order prevail against disorder, cosmos against chaos The existence of evil is recognized, but it is believed that evil can be fought and fought successfully, within

us and without us. Indra's destruction of Vritra, the power of darkness and evil, which is opposed to Rita, is indicative of the final triumph of goodness and law over evil and disorder. Indra is Vritrahantama, 'Supreme among slayers of Vritra.' Every man has his own Vritra to fight, he can fight successfully only if he is valiant enough. Thus the Vedic outlook is the heroic or epic outlook on life. Life is hard and there is evil in our midst, but victory is ours if only we are brave, and follow goodness resolutely

The river full of stones flows on
Move together, my comrades!
Stand erect and cross it.
Let us leave here those that are evil
(asevāh), we shall cross over
to powers of goodness (shivān)
(Rg X 53 8)

The *Yajur Veda* and the *Atharva Veda* reproduce the verse. The *Atharva Veda* substitutes the expression 'stand erect' (uttishthata) by the more emphatic, 'Virayaddhwam'—' Quit you like heroes!'

(f) Satya and Rita—Brahman and Kshatra

Satya in the metaphysical as well as as the moral sense, and Rita in its broad (Brihat) sense, covering the cosmic, ethical, aesthetic, and social law, as well as the ritual, represent the higher interests of life. Satya stands for the religious philosophical interest, and Rita, in its typical sense, for the moral political inter-

est. The *Rig Veda* speaks of the threefold interests of life:

Strengthen the power of knowledge
(Brahman) and strengthen minds;
Strengthen the ruling power (Kshatra)
and strengthen heroes,
Give strength to the milch-cow and
strengthen the people
(*Rg*. VIII. 35. 16-18).

Of these Brahman, corresponding to truth, represents the cultural force, Kshatra, corresponding to Rita, represents the political power, and the milch cow (pashu or pecus, wealth) represents the economic force of society. Three types of men emerge—the Brahmana, the philosophic man; the Kshatriya, the ruler man, and the Vaishya, the common man While the last will produce the wealth of the nation. the second will work for order and security and the first will carry on the intellectual and spiritual enterprise. But while the last group is taken for granted, special effort is to be directed in the encouragement of the first two groups of society. So the *Yajur Veda* insists:

Brahma dringha, kshatram dringha:
Strengthen the power of knowledge.
strengthen the ruling power (Y. VS. VI. 3).

Thus Brahman and Kshatra would make up between them the religious and [illegible] lism of Vedic times

Of the major deities, Agni particularly represents the Brahmana ideal (though He has also been spoken of as a King)

Agni is Supreme among those who live the holy life He is the holy Sage (Vipra), the holy Poet (Kavi) (*Rg* VIII. 44 21)

We have spoken of Varuna, Indra and other Deities representing the spirit of Kshatra Indra is the ideal hero

He bends not to the strong
nor to the firm,
nor to the defying foe, instigated
by the lawless (Dasyu)
For Indra the lofty mountains are as plains,
and in the deeps there is a ford for Him
(*Rg* VI 24 8)

He is the model (pratimana) for all the world (*Rg* II 12 29)

Two types of virtues are inculcated in the Vedas wisdom and valour, correspond ng to Brahman and Kshatra There are prayers on the one hand, for intellectual power (dhi) wisdom (kratu) efficiency (daksham) spiritual vigour (varchas) higher talent (medha) etc

Bestow on us the the br ghtest efficiency
(daksham) (*Rg* VI 44 9)
Endow me with sp ritual vigour (varchas)
(*Rg* I 23 24)

Win for us wisdom (medhā), win the light
(*Rg* IX 9. 9)

O God ! may my intelligence (dhi) be active
(*Rg* X. 42. 3)

Arouse our intelligence (dhi)
(*Rg*. III 62. 10, Y VS 36 3. *Sam*. 1462).

O Varuna ! sharpen the intelligence
(dhi), wisdom (kratu)
and insight (daksham) of him
who is striving for enlightenment
(*Rg* VIII. 42 3).

O Agni ! make us shine brightly like fire
produced by friction
(*Rg*. VIII. 48. 6)

Sharpen us like the barber's razor
(*Rg* VIII. 4. 16).

On the other hand, there are prayers for strength (Śavas), valour (Virya), manliness (Nrimna), spiritual power (Ojas), conquering power (Sahas), wrath (Manyu), fearlessness (Abhava), vigour (Bala) and other qualities of heroism :

O Hero ! give manly vigour (Śavas) ·
to our men (*Rg* X. 148).

So Thou Hero ! urge us to heroic power
(Virya) (*Rg* IX 110. 7)

O Conqueror ! give manliness to our
bodies, and furious valour

self culture for spiritual advancement The following progressive stages in spiritual realization are indicated in the *Yajur Veda*

> By self dedication (Vrata), one obtains
> consecration (Diksha).
> By consecration one obtains grace
> (Dakshina) ;
> By grace one obtains reverence (Shraddha)
> and by reverence is Truth (Satyam)
> obtained (*Y. VS* XIX. 30).

Consecration is not merely a formal initiation There is a deep personal contact between the teacher (Acharya) and the pupil under instruction (Shishya) While giving the initiation, the Acharya, so says the *Atharva Veda*, carries the pupil within him, so to speak, as the mother carries the foetus in her womb and after the three days of the Vrata, the pupil is born a wonder whom the Gods in a body come to see (*Ath.* XI 5. 3). This initiation, therefore, is the path of transition from darkness to light, from humanity to divinity, from untruth to truth. The prayer of the intending initiate is significant -

> Agni, Lord of Vrata ! I will
> observe the Vrata
> here I approach truth across untruth
>
> (Y. VS. I. 5)

What is the good of the instruction that the Acharya gives to the disciple? Instruction is like the

guidance that a man who knows the land gives to one who is a stranger to it

One ignorant of the land asks of one
who knows it,
he travels forward, instructed by
the knowing one
This, indeed, is the blessing of
instruction (Anusasana),
one finds the path that leads directly
forward (*Rg*. X. 62. 7).

Every one by himself could conceivably grope his way to some amount of knowledge, but under instruction one receives guidance and goes directly forward This not only establishes the necessity of instruction but also states its nature: that it is like the guidance to a traveller who is actuated by a desire to visit and see the land The initiative, therefore, lies with the pupil He is not a passive recipient, but an active agent in the acquisition of knowledge.

4 *Austerity* (*Tapas*)

The path to higher life is the path of constant and hard striving One wins intellectual and spiritual enlightenment through the sweat of one's brow. What applies to the performance of the ritual also applies generally to spiritual life

Na rite srantasya sakhaya devāh. Gods befriend none except those who have been tired (*Rg* IV 33 11).

The sleepless Ones (Atandrah) punish indolence (*Rg* VIII 2 18). Never may sleep or idle talk sway us, goes the prayer (*Rg* VIII 48 14) Tapas is the unflagging, unsparing effort in the achievement of higher things, the infinite pains one has to take to do something really worth while Tapas lies at the beginning of all great things Truth and order, it is said, were born at the beginning out of perfect spiritual effort (Tapas) Gods and sages perform noble things through Tapas

The Tapas par excellence at the beginning of life is the discipline for the student of Vedic learning (Brahman), known as Brahmacharya — the way of obtaining Vedic knowledge primarily, and the way of education and culture in a general sense The *Atharva Veda* describes the character of the Brahmachari in detail (*Ath* XI 5) ' He satisfies the Acharya by *tapas* ' ' The Brahmachari with his sacred wood (Samidh), sacred belt (Mekhalā) and his labour, satisfies the world ' ' He stands high, clad in spiritual light with his Tapas The young boy takes up the intellectual and spiritual career and after some twenty four years, the mature youth comes back to society in his new garb and his new power ' The Brahmachari comes perfected by the Samidh (spiritual practices by burning with the sacred wood), clad in the black antelope s skin, consecrated (Dikshita), wearing long beard he quickly comes (like the sun) from the eastern to the northern sea, and assembling the

people he forthwith establishes himself.' The creative energy conserved by him during the long period of continence is used on the spiritual plane animated by his creative vigour ' the four quarters live '

So all who would live worthily must be Brahmacharis. 'The king protects the state (Rashtra) through the Tapas of Brahmacharya The Acharya desires to have his pupil through Brahmacharya ' 'The maiden obtains a youthful husband through Brahmacharya.' And Brahmacharya lies at the centre of divinity 'The Shining Ones turned away death by the Tapas of Brahmacharya Indra verily, brought light to the Gods through Brahmacharya ' The Brahmachari, having bathed (Snatah)[1] bright and resplendent shines greatly on the earth '

Brahmacharya, as suggested above is the discipline of body and mind, for attaining the fitness for Vedic knowledge Much stress was laid on the control and sublimation of the sex energy Physical cleanliness was meticulously attended to The life in the open outside the common human habitations, in sunlight and fresh air, and bathing in rivers and lakes, plain food, hard work, both physical and intellectual, the performance of the fire ritual, hard bed, early rising, and constant personal supervision of the Acharya contributed to Spartan virtues . But the Brahmachari did not grow

1 A ' Snatak ' of ancient India corresponds to the modern

like a hermit secluded from society; he took his almost daily round of the neighbouring village begging his up keep, and usually meeting the mistress of the house hold with, 'Madam, give me alms' A filial attitude was cultivated towards women Again, the Brahmachari was the worshipper of Saraswati, the Divine Mother, at whose breast he prayed to be privileged to feed. As a rule the Acharya was a married man and lived with his family and the Brahmachari was adopted into it

In the Vedas the ideal of Brahmacharya stood for a preparation for life and not the entire life of man Just as in the social life the ideal of Brahman was coordinated with that of Kshatra, so in the personal life of individuals the ideal of Brahmacharya was coordinated with that of family life (Garhapatya). As the maiden, as said above, qualified herself through Brahmacharya for a young husband, so did the young man qualify himself for married life and the leadership of a family It is said of Agastya that ' the powerful sage (R shir ugrah) practised both classes of obligations (Ubhau varnau puposha), ' viz practice of Brahmacharya as well as Garhapatya, and received true benedictions from the gods (*Rg* I 179.6). The Acharya described in the *Atharva Veda* as practising Brahmacharya must have been a sage like Agastya practising Garhapatya too in *the orderly life regulated according to Rita* As Lopamudra, wife of Agastya, says :

The ancient sages who preached the Eternal law (ritas apa) and conversed of eternal statutes (ritāni) with the gods, begot progeny, and did not thereby arrive at the end (of their life of Tapas) (*Rg* 1. 179 2).

Just as there were two interests in social life, so there were two ways, one succeeding the other in individual life Here is the broad foundation of the original conception of Varnashrama Dharma (In the passage quoted above the term Verna implies Ashrama) Later on, a return to the forest (Vanaprastha) to resume Brahmacharya was set as the ideal of later life (after fifty). and later still, there was the ideal of complete renunciation (Sanyasa) for the fourth stage of life though from the earliest times there were men and women who, in their individual way remained celibates. The practice of the last two ideals, however, must have been on a much more limited scale than Brahmacharya It was Buddhism that preached the extremist ideal of exclusive Brahmacharya, in preference to Garhapatya and Kshatra.

Lord Buddha, however, rightly insisted that suffering by itself was of no avail The Veda, it should be noted, placed Tapas after Diksha · after initiation into the higher life all effort becomes constructive effort; there is no mere self-mortification there

5 *Brahman*

In its primary sense Brahman means prayer Then it means the body of verses in the Vedas meant

for prayer Then the term implies the *Vedas* as books of prayer and wisdom There is a Deity, Brahmanaspati, the Lord of Prayer Brahmacharya means the discipline for the mastery of the Vedas and Vedic knowledge Then Brahman has stood for the Object of Prayer, the Divinity especially *contemplated* as an impersonal Reality

We have referred above to the term Brahman standing for the activities connected with the search for Reality and Truth the religious-philosophical spirit from which we get the word Brahmana, one engaged in the search of Brahman (jnana yoga, as we may call it) But the word *Brahman* has also a more specific sense according to the second meaning given above it means one who knows Brahman or the text of the Veda It was a marvellous feat in the whole cultural history of the world for the Indians to have preserved the Vedas by oral tradition, taking every care to maintain each sylla ble of the text unimpaired It goes to the eternal credit of the Indians that they understood the high value of the documents and did everything humanly possible to preserve *them* in the face of terrible upheavals internal and external, that changed the whole structure of society The men who carried the Vedas in their heads deserved well of society, and a traditional social law gave them a privileged positon in that they were immune from capital punishment For to kill a Brahmana would be perhaps, to obstruct the oral tradition of a

Veda carried on by him The *Shatapatha Brahmana*, while describing the benefits of Vedic studies, speaks of the 'protection against capital punishment (Avadhyata),' as one of them (*S B*. II 5. 7)

Hindu theologians have spoken of the efficacy of the sound of the Vedic hymns (Mantras) Whatever their theological significance, that they are among the most wonderful of rhythmic creations in the whole poetical history of the world cannot be denied Even in English literature which is so rich in poetry, only the finest passages in Shakespeare and Milton can compare in respect of the power and sweep of rhythm, and sublimity and solemnity of effect, with the best of the Vedic hymns

In their purity, austerity and power, the Vedic hymns have appeared to me like the fresh, clear streams gushing out of the rocky mountain But this analogy of mine was anticipated by the Vedic sage himself

गिरिभ्रजो नोर्मयो मदन्तो

बृहस्पतिम् अभ्यर्का अनावन् ।

Like joyous streams bursting from
the mountain.
Our hymns have sounded to Brihaspati
(*Rg* X. 68 1)

That the Vedas could be handed down through oral tradition through the ages is due to some extent to the wonderful memorableness of the verses If, as some

think, memorableness is an *essential quality of poetry*, then from this criterion alone the Vedic hymns would occupy a very high place in the estimation of the world

6. *Yajna*

Yajna is the Vedic ritual or offering libation or oblation on the sacrificial fire lighted on an altar Another ritual was the offering of Soma juice Whatever the names of the deities worshipped, the ritual was the same The Vedic ritual was picturesque accompanied by chanting, singing (Sama hymns were musically rendered) and also acting There was the simple domestic sacrifice (Agnihotra), there were also great seasonal sacrifices held in open spaces and attended by vast numbers of people Political colouring was given to the ritual by the institutions of Ashwamedha (which used to be preceded by a challenge to the neighbouring states to a tournament at arms) and Rājasūya (which was utilized by emperors to obtain homage from their vassals)

Being a great public institution the Yajna developed complicated rituals that added to the attractiveness of the ceremonial side of prayer In course of time, therefore, it needed a class of experts from among Brahmanas, the knowers of the Vedas, to carry on the ritual with the appropriate ceremony This formal part of the worship began to be known as Karmakanda, the 'action part' of the religion When in later times the Vedic language became obsolete and the meaning could not be

understood by the worshipper, the formal character of the Yajna became very much pronounced And curiously enough the whole of the Vedic texts (Samhitās) came to be *regarded as part of the* Karmakanda having no relation to the spiritual or metaphysical questions! In the circumstances the mastery of the four Vedas and the accessory literature was considered to be a sort of practical and material (Aparā) knowledge, as distinguished *from the metaphysical approach to the ultimate reality* (Para) through thought and *experience* (*Mundaka Upanishad*, I 5)

It is natural that in a society with freedom of thought and expression there should be opposition to mere formalism So the *Mundaka Upanishad*, standing for spiritualism, to the total exclusion of formalism, says

They are frail rafts in the form of Yajnas in them, with the eighteen members *the work is of an inferior* type (*Mun* I 2 7)

Again, the attitude of the Bhakti (Devotion) cult (in *which* Divine grace is the only source of spiritual advancement) *is well indicated in the Bhagavad Gita* The direct experience of *the* Divine cannot be had 'by (memorising) Vedas, by Yajnas, by (religious) studies by charity,—not by actions, nor by severe austerities (Tapas) ' But this is not a later idea, We find similar expressions i[illegible] the V[illegible] for example

No one by work (Karma) attains Him
who works and strengthens evermore,
No, not by Yajnas (na yajnair) (can
one attain) Indra,
praised of all, resistless, valiant,
bold in might (*Rg* VIII 70. 3).

The conception of Yajna was much widened by the adoption of five systems of 'great Yajnas,' in which, in addition to the usual Agnihotra, the study and teaching of Vedas (Brahmayajna), service of the guest (nriyajna) giving food to lower creatures (Bhutayajna), and service of or offering of oblation to fathers (Pitriyajna), were recognized as great Yajnas (Mahayajna) The Bhagavad Gita, in its own remarkable way, distinguishes the spirit of Yajna from its forms If the spirit is accepted then the material part of Yajna related to the fire, fuel, and the oblation, may be taken not only literally but also symbolically and figuratively. If so then the Yajna of the Karmakanda would be material Yajna, but there will also be the Yajna of Tapas (spiritual discipline) in which the fire of restraint is lighted and the senses (or sensual pleasures) are the offering, there will be the Yajna of Yoga in which the vital functions will be the *offering into fire of self control*, and there will be the Yajna of sacred studies (Brahmayajna) and of *jnana* (in which Brahman—the Supreme Reality—is fire, fuel and oblation as well as sacrificer) for men of spiritual discipline and self dedication If this wider meaning of

Yajna, is taken then it must be admitted, in the same wider sense, that (as the *followers* of the Karmakanda claim) 'the eaters of the ambrosia of the remains of Yajna go to the changeless Eternal' There should then not only be no opposition to Yajna but Yajna must be accepted as the central thing in the discipline for higher life.

Even this world is not for the man without Yajna, what to speak of any *other* (*Gita, Ch*, IV, *31*)

Even in the Veda we find Yajna taken in the figurative sense The *Yajur Veda* says that 'life prospers through Yajna (spirit of sacrifice)'

Even the ritual of Yajna—the Karma-kanda—prospers through Yajna (spirit of sacrifice)

यज्ञो यज्ञेन कल्पताम्; May Yajna (ritual) prosper through Yajna (spirit of sacrifice) (*Yajur*. VS IX 21)

VedicRealism

The spiritualization of the concept of Yajna is quite in keeping with the Indian system of thought. The institution of Yajna as ritual however, had specialities of its own It emphasized, for one thing, the realistic elements of the Vedic religion Just as, in contrast with the way of the ascetic (Muni) which is austere and silent there is the way of the sage (Rishi) who expresses *himself through poetry, music and oratory, so in contrast* with the non-ritualistic spiritual strivings of the *Yogi* who seeks the Eternal through supersensual paths, there

is the way of Karma kanda (ritual), where colour and sound and fragrance and all the other finer things of the senses have their full play The glorious lustre of the blazing fire, the sweet perfume of the burnt ghee, the blades of grass, the cooked offering, the crushed soma and all the other material of Yajna had their direct and purifying effect on the minds of the worshippers

And the acting of the priests the chanting and the music, and the mass action in making the final offering — these carried an immediacy of appeal which was of no small spiritual value

The Vedic age delighted in forms and ceremonies It may be asked: Is form altogether unnecessary? Has it no relation to the spirit? Are clothes a mere *wrappage? Is food of no concern* whatever to the soul of man? Is decoration mere luxury?

The Vedas do not think so The *Rig Veda* gives the answer in a paradox

Food is Soul, the apparel is the body, and the ointment as the giver of
spiritual vigour

आत्मा पितुर् तनुर् वास
ओजोदा अभ्यञ्जनम् ।

ऋ ८।१२।४

One who accepted this would say with Walt Whitman,

"What is the soul if the body
is not the soul?"

Ascetics have gone the way of starving the body to feed the soul. But the realist: who feels the joy of life, would feed the body to make the soul strong. 'The apparel oft proclaims the man,' says the philosopher of the court in Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. But does not the apparel not only give a shape and form and colour to the body, but also do more, namely, symbolize the whole personality?[1] And the use of the ointment (a luxury of ancient India) is declared to be a source of spiritual vigour (Ojas) for which the ascetic would consider no privation too hard!

If *this is so, is spirituality only seeing with the* soul? The Veda has said that 'the wise see with the spirit and the mind.'

हृदा पश्यन्ति मनसा विपश्चितः । ऋ. १०।१७७।१

But is it not glorious to see with the bodily eyes too, and feel with the body, things that uplift and ennoble? A sage in the *Rig Veda* prays,

'Give sight to our eyes,
Give sight to our bodies that they may see
May we survey and discern this world
May *we look on Thee,* Surya,
the most lovely to behold.
see well with the eyes of men'
(*Rg* X. 158. 4-5)

1. Cf Carlyle, *Sartor Resartus*, for both the sides of the question.

That Eye as it rises before us God ordained,' runs another verse, 'we will see for a hundred ye: and we will live for a hundred years' (*Rg* VII 66 1 The *Yajur Veda* adds to this verse

'And we will hear for a hundred years
and speak for a hundred years
and we will *hold our heads high* for
a hundred years, yea,
even more than a hundred years'
(Y *VS* 36 24)

The realist ideal of life is that of
a perfect body and a perfect mind
(Atharva Veda)

This leads to the striving after
perpetual youth,
'We will be ever youthful (Ajara) in
Thy friendship,' says a
Rig Vedic sage
addressing Indra (VII 54.2) For
Indra is our 'youthful friend'
'ever youthful
'Years do not age Him
nor months nor days wear out Indra'
(VI 24 7)

Has not the sage known the Atman also 'who is satisfied with Rasa (*the joy-giving essence of things*) and is not wanting in anything,' as 'serene ageless and

youthful'? (Atmanam dhiram ajaram yuvanam) (*Ath X*. 8 44).

In the mythologies both Hindu and Greek, we read much about heaven, but in the Vedas there is scanty reference to the world to come (Cf *Rg* IX 7 11) The Vedas interpret the beauty and glory of the earth and the wonder of life The great paean to the Earth in the *Atharva Veda* is one of the most magnificent poetic expressions on the subject in world literature

This world is the most beloved of all 'ayam lokah priyatamah says the *Atharva Veda* addressing a diseased man, 'Die not before decrepit age' (*Ath V*. 30 17) In the following *Rig Vedic* verse, the enveloping air, which we now know to be an essential condition of the existence of life on the earth, is called upon to bring health and happiness :

'May the Air blow His balm
carrying joy and health
(Sambhu mayobhu) to our hearts,
May He prolong our lives (*Rg*. X 186. 1)

There is no waiting for a world to come, we must be happy here (Iha) and now (Adya Idānim),

'Make us today (adya) enjoyers of
wide room and happinees (*Rg* IX. 84 1)

'May we be masters of felicity
now (Idanim) (*Rg*. VII 41. 4)

The realist's joy of life is evident in the attitude of worship. The *mood of worship in the Vedas* is not a gloomy one. Worship, like song and poetry, is an over flow of the joy of the soul

'Agni, the joyous, much beloved .
we worship with joyous hearts '

(*Rg* VIII 43 31)

'Like joyous streams bursting from
the mountain' the 'hymns of
prayer have proceeded to the
Divinity (*Rg* X 68, 1)

Another aspect of Vedic Realism is that man is not conceived to be a mean and sinful creature, on the other hand he is conscious of a *divinity within himself* '*O* Bounteous Ones, we have established here our perpetual brotherhood, our kinship, in the mother's womb,' says a sage in the *Rig Veda*, addressing Gods (VIII 83 8). The *Atharva Veda*, after describing the creation of man, says that 'having fused the mortal man complete, the Gods entered into him (*Ath* XI 8 13) So, to be human is to be divine too

'Therefore whoever knows man regards
Him as Brahman's self'

(Brahmeti manyate (*Ath* XI. 8, 32).

To others, God is in His heaven, to the Vedic Realist, God is in the universe. Pasya mel a—'See Me here '—is the revelation He is also in the homes as

well as the hearts of man. The home of man that is ruled by the master and mistress, is really presided over by the Deity—Agni—who is addressed as 'Grihapati,' Master of the household (Y I S. 2 28) He has also been spoken of as 'the beloved house friend *Damunas*), the Guest in the house' (*Rg* V 4 9). And there can be divine beauty in the dwelling of man if it is properly built The bountiful man receives the following blessing

'To the bountiful may there be the house,
(*lovely*) like the lake of *lotus*,
Ornamented around, beautiful as the
divine mansion' (*Rg* X 107 10)

Naturally, the home was regarded with tender feelings. 'Sweet be my going forth from home, and sweet be my return to it.

(*Rg*. X. 24 6)

Vedic Collectivism

Just as the Yajna illustrated the realist spirit in the Vedas, the exaltation of the earth and man, and the joy of life, so also did it symbolize the collectivistic ideal of the Vedas

First, there is the ideal of conjugal union Every Yajna required the presence of the master (Pati) and mistress (Patni) of the household The marriage hymns in the *Rig Veda*, (X 85) reproduced in the *Atharva Veda* (Ch X IV), with interesting supplements have been the means of consecrating marriage

endeared of her husband, and she also prays for wealth and heroic sons (*Rg* X 10 12 13) The order of domestic life is under Eternal Order (Rita), and hence the marital relations are consecrated ' May you two ' says the *Atharva Veda*, addressing the married couple, ' in the pursuit of Eternal Law (Rita), speaking truth (Rita) enjoy *together* prosperity and good fortune '

The problem of domestic life is to establish the harmony and concord that exist in Nature through the working of Eternal Order (Rita) The same is the problem of social life as a whole In the Vedic ideology the prefix Sam (Com) is found to be attached to words indicating the collective actions of people Similarly *Samana* (common) implies a collective relation. Sa-, and Saha also have been used for the idea of union In the *Atharva Veda* (III 30) the sage addresses a family group

' I shall make you of united (Sa) heart,
of one (Sam) mind, free from hate,
be attached to one another like the
newly born calf to the cow

Let the son follow the father in his
noble endeavour (Vrata)
and be of one mind with the mother
let the wife speak sweet peaceful
words to the husband

Let not brother hate brother,
sister hate sister,
Be all united (Sam) and of one (Sa)
high purpose (Vrata) and speak
words with courtesy
May your drink be common (Samana)
your food be together (Saha) '

So, first comes the conjugal union, then the unity of the family The family is desired to assemble round the sacrificial fire like the spokes of a wheel round the nave (*Ath*)

From the family, there is the higher step to the society at large One must not live for oneself alone. ' The solitary eater is the solitary sinner' (*Rg*, X. 117. 6) The sombre words in the closing hymn of the *Rig Veda* have resounded through the ages

' Assemble (Sam), speak in harmony (Sam)
May your minds be of one accord (Sam-)
Your prayer (Mantra) be common (Samāna),
your assembly be common (Samāna),
Common (Samāna) your mind, united (Saha)
your thoughts,
I counsel you to common (Samāna) purpose,
and I worship with your
common (Samāna) oblation.' (*Rg* X, 191, 2-3),

The common oblation was a visible demonstration of social unity

In collective life, assemblies play an important part, and the art of speaking is much in demand Sages pray that they may 'speak loud' in the socio religious assembly—Vidatha (*Rg* II 19) The newly married wife is told that she would address the Vidatha Then there was the Sabha—the political council which required well quaiified people In the *Yajur Veda* there is a prayer that the Prince should have for his son a 'Sabheya Yuva, a youth capable of playing his part in the Sabha or political gathering (*Y VS* XXII 22) The *Rig Veda* speaks of the man who has carried the day in the political assembly 'All his friends are delighted with the man who has triumphed in the Council and returned in glory' (*Rg* X 71 10) Elsewhere there is a prayer for the ideal son

" To the man who offers to him
God Soma gives a hero son (Vir)

who is fit for work (Karmanya),
fit for the home (Sadanya),

fit for the religious assembly (Vidathya),
fit for the political council

(Sabheya) and a source of glory to
his father" (*Rg* I. 91. 20)

Here is the ideal for the good citizen A man must live beyond his *individual sphere and contribute to* collective life Beyond the limited interests of the family and the social group there was the wider interest of the state (rashtra), which was the concern of all the enlightened people Sages in the *Yajur Veda* declare

' We shall awake in the state, placed *in* the front line'—vayam rashtre jagriāma purohitāh (*Y. VS* XIX 23)

Vedic Universalism

All the instruction and exhortation of the Vedas are addressed to humanity at large It is repeatedly asserted that the Deity is common to all

समानम् इन्द्रम् अवसे हवामहे . we invoke for succour Indra who is common to all (*Rg* VIII 99 8)

इन्द्र साधारणस् त्वम् . Indra Thou art common to all (i. e the common Lord of all)

Twam vishwe mānusha yugendra havante Thee all races of mankind, Indra ! with uplifted ladles invoke (*Rg* VIII 46 12)

The sages preached the Vedas to all, at home and abroad A sage in *Yajur Veda* says

'So may I speak these blessed words
to the people at large (janebhyah)
to the Brahmana and the Kshatriya,
to the Shudra and the Vaishya

to my own people (swaya) and to the foreigner (aranaya) (Y VS 26 2) *

Progressing on the way of Brahman—the Vedas and spiritual knowledge—one grows more and more liberal and the vision is widened The Vedas proceed from fellowship with men to the fellowship with all living beings, insisting on the reciprocity of the feeling 'O the Strong One ! make me strong

May all the living beings look on me with the eye of a friend,

May I look on all living beings with the eye of a friend.

* [We find from the *Ramayana* that the non-Aryan races were quite conversant with the Vedas Rama and Lakshmana, wandering in search of Sita are met by Hanuman who addresses them in Sanskrit Rama admires the correctness of his language and says

'Nanrigveda-vinitasya nayajurvedadharinah,
nasamaveda vidushah sakyam evam prabhashitum
(*Ramayana*, Kish)'
'For one not made wise by the study of the *Rig Veda*,
for one who has not mastered the *Yajur Veda*
for one not versed in the *Sama Veda* it is not possible to
speak like this'

When Hanuman enters Lanka alone in search of Sita he hears at night 'the mantras of the reciters in the homes of Rakshasas' and he 'sees demons (Yatudhanan) engaged in the study of the Holy Scriptures (swadhyayanirata) i e Vedas (*Rama* Sund) At any rate Valmiki understood the Vedas to be meant for all the races of mankind]

May we (all) look on (one another) with the eye of a friend (mitra) (Y, *VS* 36 18)

In his final realization, the sage, who is described as Vena, the Loving One[1] sees all reality united in the Supreme Being

'The loving sage beholds that mysterious Existence (Sat)

Wherein the universe comes to have one nest'
(*Y VS* 32, 8),

India has experimented with the six principles of religion, considered above, for at least three thousand and five hundred years Qualitatively very great success has been achieved throughout the ages, including the one in which we are living Men remarkable for their spiritual power wisdom, and universality of outlook have been thrown up from different parts of the country Quantitatively too the results are not negligible, the masses of Hindus even today show certain essential traits of behaviour which are in conformity with some of these principles and which often present a contrast to similar classes of people at home and abroad

The order of the principles has remained qualitatively much as the Veda put them The one that created dissent earliest of all was the last—ritual

1 Cf *Rg* Venanti venah (X 64—2) The lovers (i e loving worshippers) yearn with love

(Karma kand). The Vedic text, Sabda Brahman (which is last but one) is still being learnt orally by scores of people in different parts of India And at is to the eternal credit of Western savants that they published authoritative texts of the Vedas Valmiki compares Hanuman's quest of Sita to the search for a lost Veda (Nashtam Veda srutim iva), these devoted scholars have performed the task of cultural volunteers in the present times Consecration and self-dedication (Diksha and Tapah), the third and fourth principles, are found to have remarkable parallels in the whole hearted pursuit of knowledge among Western scholars and scientists The physical and cultural value of the sublimation of the reproductive energy has been newly recognized by modern analytical psychology Rita (Order) in the wide (Brihat) Vedic sense is still to be realized by the world, torn asunder by manifold forces of disorder, and the harmony of the introverted Yogic path has to find its parallel in the concrete, external relations of men, communities and nations Finally, the first principle is ever first; Satya as integrity, for every moment of life, and Satya as Sat or Reality for those exalted moments when man ' feels greater than he knows or those exalted men who live " on the peak of existence ' (Kutastha) ' There have been leaders of thought in different ages who have asserted that religion is synonymous with truth —that God is Truth.

Nowadays we come across apologists for the abori-

ginal cultures superseded by the Vedic. It is difficult to decide if much of Dravidian culture is really non Vedic But the culture of aboriginal tribes like Bhils, Kols, Santals, Kukis, Todas and Oraos are evidently non-Vedic It is interesting to find how these tribes have lived their simple picturesque lives in the jungles without a change for the last three or four millenniums, while in their immediate neighbourhood the grand drama of the main body of the Indian people was being enacted with its rise and fall, climax and catastrophe, from age to age Simplicity and picturesqueness are good enough in their own way—and that is why these aboriginal people need not be disturbed and should be given protection against zealous evangelists—but the intellectual adventure, the spiritual quest, the attempt to break the barriers of tribe and group and unite men through ideals of harmony and order, of justice and universal fellowship, these will ever lure the spirit of the awakened man, and endless efforts will be made to achieve progress and upliftment for the race

It is the essence of the Vedic outlook to be progressive Go forward, fear not, fight,' says the Vedic spirit of Kshatra (*Rg* I. 80. 3) प्रेहि अभीहि धृष्णुहि. 'He goes forward, instructed by one who knows,' says the spirit of Brahman: स प्रैति क्षेत्रविदानुशिष्ट. (ऋ. १०।३२।७) To return, then, to the Vedas is to return to the dynamic view of life characteristic of the Vedic age—the Age of Truth (Satya Yuga)

One who lies down is Kali,
one who awakes is Dwāpara,
One who stands up becomes Tretā,
and one who moves on realizes
the Satya Yuga Therefore move on !
(*Aitareya Brahmana*)-

' Indra (the Supreme Vedic Deity),' says the *Aitareya Brahman*, 'is the friend of those who move on '

The Vedas, however, do not contemplate movement without a purpose, a mere form of life without a content It conceives movement as the *progress* on the path of Truth and Eternal Order, consecration and self-dedication to a noble ideal, of prayer and wisdom, and of ritual and sacrifice Man has to grow to the fullest stature of his being so that he may live in *a broad, free world in the joy of the spirit*, The *Atharva Veda* which contemplates the six principles of Dharma contemplates such a world too

' Truth, Order that is great and stern,
consecration, austerity
prayer and ritual—these uphold the earth
May that Earth, Mistress of the past
and the future, make a wide world
for us' (*Ath* XII 1 1)

भक्ति-योग

THE PATH OF DEVOTION

THE PATH OF DEVOTION

The simplest attitude in religion is that of *love* and devotion (भक्तियोग). Here the Divinity is contemplated as the Lord and in most affectionate terms, as Father, *Mother*, Brother, Friend, Guest and so on. The worshipper seeks Divine bliss (स्वनि). He prays for grace (ऊति), benediction (शम्), protection (शर्मन्), succour (अवस्), mercy (मृळा), *benevolence* (सुमति), love (वेन) etc. God is the Saviour (त्राता), the Merciful One (मर्डिता), *Protector* (अविता), and so on. He is the Beloved One (जुष्ट, प्रेष्ठ) and He as well as the worshipper is *described* as the Loving One (वेन). According to this ideology the Divinity is Common (समान) and Universal (साधारण). The spirit of love arouses the finest of Vedic poetry, and *prayer often becomes song.*

(1)

The Supreme Being

हिरण्यगर्भः समवर्तताग्रे
भूतस्य जातः पतिर् एक आसीत् ।
स दाधार पृथिवीं द्याम् उतेमां
कस्मै देवाय हविषा विधेम ॥

ऋग्वेद, मंडल १०।१२१।१
यजुर्वेद (वाजसनेयी संहिता) १३।३, २३।१, २५।१०
अथर्ववेद, ४।२।७

"What God shall we adore with our oblation ?
The Divine Being who existed in the beginning,
Who was the One Lord of creation,
Who fixed and upholds this earth and sky
[The Deity is Kah, " Who ?]

God is Creator and Ultimate Being He is the Lord of all existence—the Supporter of the universe

It is typical of Vedic worship that the worshipper seeks the knowledge of the Object to be worshipped His devotion is not blind, but based on enlightenment

(2)

The Source of Power √

य आत्मदा बलदा यस्य विश्व
उपासते प्रशिषं यस्य देवा ।
यस्य च्छायामृतं यस्य मृत्यु:
कस्मै देवाय हविषा विधेम ॥
ऋ १०।१२१।२ य २३। ३, २५।१३ अ ४।२।८

"What God shall we adore with our oblation ?
Him who is the giver of power and vigour,
Whose commandments all cosmic forces obey,
Him whose shadow is immortality and who is the Lord of death '
[The Deity is Kah Who ?]

God is the Source of all strength, spiritual as well as physical. In Him man has his greatest refuge Death is from Him, in His shadow is immortality

(3)

The Rallying Point of All

समेत विश्वा ओजसा पति दिवा
य एक इद् भूर् अतिथिर्जनानाम् ।
स पूर्व्यो नूतनम् आजिगापन्त
वतनारनु वावृत एक इत् ॥ साम १।४।२।३ (३७२)

'Come together ye all, with power of spirit, to the Lord of heaven,
Who is only One, the Guest of the people,
He the Ancient, desires to come to the new,
To Him all path ways turn, verily He is One'
[The Deity is Indra]

The noble verse is reproduced from the Sama veda in the Atharva veda VII 21 1 [where the Deity is Brahman]

Note the word समेत "come together "assemble" The Vedic worship was of a collective type विश्वा—all—implies that all are invited to worship, without exception and without *distinction* ओजस् *is spiritual power* or soul-force, which was specially cultivated by the Vedic religion एक—One—implies unity of the Godhead अतिथि—Guest—is a graceful expression One who is most welcome जन— means the people God is the God of all Compare—

इन्द्र साधारणस्त्वम् । ऋ. ८।६५।७

"God! Thou art common to all

Also—

समानम् इन्द्रम् अवसे हवामहे । ऋ. ८।९९।८

'*We invoke Indra who is common to* all'

पूर्व्यो—the Ancient the First cause 'To Him all path ways turn —i e He is the Supreme Goal of all

(4)

Song of *Praise*

अर्चत प्रार्चत प्रियमेधासो अर्चत ।
अर्चन्तु पुत्रका उत पुरं न धृष्णवर्चत ॥
अव स्वराति गर्गरो गोधा परि सनिष्वणत् ।
पिङ्गा परि चनिष्कदद् इन्द्राय ब्रह्मोद्यतम् ॥

ऋ ८।६९।८-९

"Sing, sing ye forth your songs of praise,
sing, O Priyamedhas!
Let children also sing!
Sing the praise of Him who is a Refuge like the castle
Now loudly let the violin sound,
the lute send its voice with might,
Let the string send its tunes about,
to God is our hymn upraised"

[Here the Deity is Indra]

Down through the ages the sky of India has rung with songs of love and devotion

This is the typical mode of worship according to the path of devotion (भक्ति). Here prayer is the musical out burst from the love filled heart of man. This simple and direct prayer comes from the child as well as the adult.

(5)

The Greatest Friend

त्राता नो बोधि ददृशान आपिर्
अभिख्याता मर्डिता सोम्यानाम् ।
सखा पिता पितृतम पितृणा
कर्तमु लोकम् उशते वयोधाः ॥ ऋ. ४।१७।१७

"Be Thou our Saviour, show Thyself our Own,
looking after and showing mercy to the worshippers.
Friend, Father, Fatherliest of fathers,
Giving to the loving worshipper freedom and vital power."

The terms त्राता, Saviour, मर्डिता, the Merciful One, and सखा, Friend, typically signify the spirit of the religion of devotion (भक्ति योग). Similarly उशते, 'to the loving or longing one", shows love as the mode of approach to the Divine. 'Fatherliest of fathers' indicates the supreme nature of the Divinity. The gifts asked for are also typical of the Vedas — लोकम् — 'a wide world', in which we can move freely, and वयः, 'life, vital force'.

[God is spoken of as Indra.]

The One with many Names

यो नः पिता जनिता यो विधाता
धामानि वेद भुवनानि विश्वा ।
यो देवाना नामधा एक एव
त सप्रश्न भुवना यन्त्यन्या ॥ ऋ. १०।८२।३
य. १७।२७; अ. २।१।३

'Father who made us, our Disposer,
He knows all positions, all things existing;
He is the only One, giving names to different Gods,
Him other beings seek with queries.'

God is One, Gods are differently named Ideas of the One Being.

[The Deity is Vishwakarman (विश्वकर्मन्), the Creator (lit. Architect) of the Universe.]

The same verse occurs in *Atharva veda* (11.1.3)

स नः पिता जनिता स उत बन्धुः

"He is our Father, our Progenitor, Our Friend."

In *Yajur veda* a somewhat different version of the same stanza occurs:

स नो बन्धुर् जनिता स विधाता
धामानि वेद भुवनानि विश्वा । य. (वा.स.) ३२।१०

"He is our Friend, Our Father, Our creator;
He is Master of all existing things and all Laws".

Also compare *Samaveda* (1841):

उत वात पितासि न उत भ्रातोत न सखा

' O God ! Thou art our Father, our *Brother*, our Friend "

(Also *Rigveda* X 186 2)

(6)

Divine Benevolence

अभ्यूर्णोति यन्नग्नं भिषक्ति विश्वं यत् तुरम् ।
प्रेमन्ध: ख्यन्नि: श्रोणो भूत् ॥ ऋ. ८।७९।२

"*He clothes all that is naked,*
He doctors all that is sick
The blind man sees, the cripple walks "
[The *Deity is Agni*]

Here Divine benevolence is described Man is most God like when he takes care of the naked, the sick, the blind and the cripple

(7)

God is Pure

एतो न्विन्द्रं स्तवाम शुद्धं शुद्धेन साम्ना ।
शुद्धैरुक्थैर्वावृध्वांसं शुद्ध आशीर्वान् ममत्तु ॥
ऋ ८।९५।७

"Come now and let us glorify the Deity, who is pure, with pure Sama hymn

"Let us delight Him with pure laudation, may the Pure, Blissful One, be pleased '

Purity is Godliness Man should be pure in body and mind in offering his prayers to God

Compare the following verse which describes divine holiness

अग्निः शुचिव्रततमः शुचिर्विप्रः शुचिः कविः ।
शुची रोचत आहुतः ॥ ऋ. ८।४४।२१

"The Deity is Supreme among those who live the holy life He is the Holy Sage, the holy Poet He, who is being called by us in prayer, is resplendent in holiness"

The Vedas, in addition to recognising truth, goodness and beauty as the values of life, also recognise the spiritual value—holiness

(8)

The Divinity in Man

प्र भ्रातृत्वं सुदानवोऽध द्विता समान्या ।
मातुर्गर्भे भरामहे ॥ ऋ. ८।८३।८

"O Bounteous Ones, we have established here our perpetual brotherhood,
Our kinship, in the mother's womb."

To be born man is to partake of the divine nature. Man establishes his kinship with the Divine in the mother's womb

[The verse is addressed to "All Gods" (विश्वे देवाः)]

This sense of the essential divinity of man is a special feature of the Vedic religion and Aryan spiritual idealism The idea also occurs in the Atharva Veda Book XI, where in the description of the creation of the Body of Man in the beginning, it is said

सर्वं संसिच्य मर्त्यं देवाः पुरुषमाविशन् (अ. ११।८।१३)

" When they had fused the mortal man
complete, the Gods entered into him "

तस्माद् वै विद्वान् पुरुषमिदं ब्रह्मेति मन्यते ।
सर्वा ह्यस्मिन् देवता गावो गोष्ठ इवासते ॥ (अ. ११।८।३२)

" Therefore whoever knoweth man regardeth him as Brahman's self

For all the Deities ' (or divine qualities) "abide in him as cattle in their pen "

In Rigveda *men have been addressed as* " sons of immortality '

शृण्वन्तु विश्वे अमृतस्य पुत्रा
आ ये धामानि दिव्यानि तस्थुः । ऋ. १०।१३।१

" May all sons of immortality listen,—all the possessors of celestial natures "

It is from this point of view that religion has been described as " the manifestation of the divinity that is *already in man*" (Swami Vivekananda) Man approaches God through what is divine in himself.

(9)

Approaching the *Divine through the* Joy of Soul

अग्नि मन्द्रं पुरुप्रिय
शीरं पावकशोचिषम् ।
हृद्भि मन्द्रेभि रीमहे ॥ ऋ ८।४३।३१

"We worship with joyous hearts the joyous *Deity*, dear to all effulgent, holy, purifying" (Rig viii 43 31)

There is a sacredness in our highest joy, corresponding to the infinite joy in the Divine Hence a medium of approach to the Divine is the joy of the soul

The conception of the joy of a stainless soul seeking the stainless joy of the Divine is typically *Aryan* According to it man is not borne down under the burden of sin His is not a worship in penitence It is the opening of the flood gates of a joyous soul before the radiant glory of the Source of all joy

Vedic poetry is typical of this joyous out pouring of a lofty spirit. The Vedic hymns have been rightly compared in the *Veda itself* to streams gushing out of mountains

गिरिभ्रजो नोर्मयो मदन्तो ।
बृहस्पतिमभ्य१ र्का अनावन् ॥ ऋ १०।६८।१

"Like merry streamlets bursting from the mountain to Brihaspati our hymns have sounded"

(10)

God the Saviour

त्रातारमिन्द्रम् अवितारमिन्द्र हवे हवे सुहवं शूरमिन्द्रम् ।
ह्वयामि शक्र पुरुहूतमिन्द्र स्वस्ति नो मघवा धात्विन्द्र ॥

ऋ ६।४७।११, साम ३३३
अ ७।८६।१, शु य २०।५०

"God the Rescuer, God the Saviour, Mighty God happily invoked at each invocation,
God, *Powerful*, invoked of many, I invoke,
May God, *the Bounteous, confer on us blessing*"
(Here God is spoken of as Indra)

The hymn occurs in all the four Vedas, being put into the musical form *in the Sama Veda* The recurring rhythm of "Indram and the smoothly flowing sounds make it most suitable for communal singing (*kirtana*)

The idea is typical of the attitude of devotion (*bhakti*, as it came to be called later) in which man seeks Divine assistance and grace to help him out of his sorrows and imperfections According to the *bhakti* ideal, the sincere devotion of the heart is enough for *worship*, the details of ritual are not needed The same conception is *found here*

This is a feature of mass religion This hymn, in respect of its idea as well as of metrical form, is a *typical* mass prayer

It may be noted that according to the *Vedas*, God Himself is the Saviour and Helper. In later times, in India and elsewhere, there have been religious sects thinking of a God-sent man (prophet) or God man (*avatar* or Messiah) as the Helper and Saviour. Still later, the instructor (*guru*) assumed almost the dignity of a Saviour. But the Vedic ideal of God as the Helper and Saviour carries a deeper and more universal appeal than these.

[We find echoes of this hymn in the devotional songs of later times, as in

भज गोविन्द भज गोविन्द भज गोविन्दम्.

'Govinda' evidently is a Vaishnavite substitute for the Vedic 'Indra'.]

(11)

God, the Refuge of Man.

प्र ते यक्षि प्र त इयर्मि मन्म
भुवो यथा वन्द्यो नो हवेषु ।
धन्वन्निव प्रपा असि त्वमग्न
इयक्षवे पुरवे प्रत्न राजन् ॥ ऋ १०।४।१

"To Thee I will bring oblation, to Thee I will send my prayer—to Thee who hast been adorable in our invocations,

A fountain in the desert art Thou, O Deity! to the worshipful man, O Ancient King!"

R. V. X. 4. 1

Here, again, we find an attitude of worship in keeping with what has come to be known latterly as the spirit of *bhakti* As in the desert the thirsty man is saved by a fountain of water found in an oasis, so in the world man is saved by Divine grace

(12)

The Divine Mother.

The same idea of the Divinity as the Refuge of man is expressed in the following hymn in which the Deity is addressed in the *feminine gender*, as *Mother*

इमा जुह्वाना युष्मदा नमोभि
प्रति स्तोम सरस्वति जुषस्व ।
तव शर्मन् प्रियतमे दधाना
उप स्थेयाम शरण न वृक्षम् ॥

ऋ ७।९५।५

"'These offerings have ye made with adoration', say this Saraswati and be pleased with our prayer,

And placing us under Thy most beloved protection may we approach Thee as a tree for shelter"

As birds seek the shelter of the tree so we, men, seek the shelter of the Divine Mother, Saraswati

The worship of the Divinity as Mother is a special feature of the religion of love The word "*priyatama*",

'most beloved, which carries so much sweetness in the text quoted above, is still used in the Indian languages and has the same sweet association about it

The word शर्मन् 'Divine protection, grace', occurs frequently in the *Vedas*. The *Sama Veda* has a beautiful line about it

शर्म वर्म ममान्तरम् (सा १८७२)

" Divine grace is the coat of mail within me

(The warrior is clad in the coat of mail which protects the vital parts of his body, but the grace of God is the coat of mail within him)

(13)

Prayer to God in Pain

Through the joy of his soul man approaches God, the joyful In moments of pain and distress he approaches God the merciful The following prayer is of this type

मूषो न शिश्ना व्यदन्ति माध्य स्तोतारं ते शतक्रतो ।
सकृत् सु नो मघवन्निन्द्र मृळयाऽधा पितेव नो भव ॥

ऋ० १०।३३।३

' As rats eat weavers' threads, cares are consuming me, thy singer, O God Almighty !

Have mercy on us now, O Gracious Lord! Be Thou a Father unto us".

This prayer for मृळ, Divine mercy or grace, like that for Divine protection (शर्मन्) is typical of the attitude of *bhakti*, and is a feature of mass religion.

(14)

God the Support of the Humble

वि चक्रमे पृथिवीम् एष एतां
क्षेत्राय विष्णुर् मनुषे दशस्यन्।
ध्रुवासो अस्य कीरयो जनास
उरुक्षितिं सुजनिमा चकार ॥ ऋ ७।१००।४

"*Vishnu overstrode this earth, ready to give it for a* home to man

In Him the humble people find their safety

This noble One has made the earth spacious for them"

The worship of Vishnu took a sectarian form in *the Vaishnavite cult. But the ideology of Vaishnavism* is found in the Vedas According to this, the chief thing in religion is Divine grace which is most needed by the humble and distressed The devotee constantly realises that all he has and all he enjoys are from God who in this infinite kindness has endowed him with these

This is also the ideology of mass-religion.

(18)

The Divinity as Mother to Infants

यस्ते स्तनः शशयो यो मयोभूर्
येन विश्वा पुष्यसि वार्याणि ।
यो रत्नधा वसुविद् यः सुदत्रः
सरस्वति तम् इह धातवे कः ॥ ऋ. १।१६४।४९,
अ. ७।१०।१, शु य. ३८।५

"Saraswati! that exhaustless breast of Thine which is the source of well being,

With which Thou nourishest all good things,

Which is the container of treasure, the possessor of wealth, giver of goodness,

That Thou lay bare here for our nourishment"

Here the worshipper is like the child feeding at the breast of the Divine Mother.

The following is a similar prayer to "Ushas"

तस्यास्ते रत्नभाज ईमहे वय
स्याम मातुर् न सूनवः । ऋ ७।८१।४

"We yearn to be Thine own, Dealer of jewels, May we be like sons of Thee, the Mother"

(19)

The Divinity as Child.

The idea of God being the most beloved has been expressed in various ways. He has been compared to the child loved by and loving the mother, as in the following stanza.

एक: सुपर्ण: स समुद्रम् आ विवेश
स इद विश्व भुवन वि चष्टे ।
त पाकेन मनसापश्यम् अन्तितस्
त माता रेळ्हि स उ रेळ्हि मातरम् ॥ ऋ. १०।११४।४

"The One Beautiful winged [i e. the Divine]— He has entered the sea (vastness of space),

He looks round this whole universe,

Him with a simple heart I have seen from near,

Him His Mother kisses and He kisses His Mother."

"सुपर्ण", the "Beautiful winged" (Bird), *is a symbol* for the Deity in the mystical conception of the Divinity. *Note the following line in the same hymn*

सुपर्ण विप्रा. कवयो वचोभिर्
एक सन्त बहुधा कल्पयन्ति । ऋ. १०।११४।५

"The Beautiful winged (Bird)" [i e. the Deity] who is One the wise poets imagine with their words in many ways."

The poet says he observes *the Divine Being from* near and sees the vision of the child kissed by and kissing the mother.

Here, whatever the rational significance of the line, the spiritual and poetic significance is simple and clear· that the vision of the Divinity is the vision of sweet love between child and mother.

(20)

Hymns caress the Child

The idea is also found in R. V. X. 123. 1—where the Deity is spoken of as " Vena ", " the loving (and beloved) One "

> अय वेनश्चोदयत् पृश्निगर्भा
> ज्योतिर्जरायू रजसो विमाने ।
> इमम् अपां सगमे सूर्यस्य
> शिशु न विप्रा मतिभी रिहन्ति ॥ ऋ. १०।१२३।१,
> शु. य. ७।१६

" This is the Loving One, driving the issues of the many-coloured,

The Spring of light, in the chariot of splendour,

Him at the meeting of the waters and the sun

The sages with their hymns caress as a child."

Here also out of the obscurity of mystic symbolism there emerges a clear poetic idea that the songs of the sages caress the Divinity as a child.

(21)

Hymns Kiss the Child

There is an equally mystical stanza—R.V. IX. 85. 11—in which the loving sages, called " Venas " (loving ones) seek the mysterious Being

नाके सुपर्णम् उपपप्तिवासं
गिरो वेनानाम् अकृपन्त पूर्वीः ।
शिशुं रिहन्ति मतयः पनिप्नत
हिरण्ययं शकुनं क्षामणि स्थाम् ॥ ऋ. ९।८५।११

"The many voices of the loving ones sought the Bird who had flown to the heavens ·

The hymns kiss the Child worthy of laudation,—the golden-hued Bird that sits on the earth."

In spite of the mystical symbolism the idea of worship through tender love corresponding to the tender caressing of a child is clear enough here.

[*In later forms of* Indian *religion* the conception *of the Divinity as a child reappears in the "religion of* affection" — "vatsala rasa"—which formed part of the Bhakti cult. *In the* Purana, Child Krishna is made to symbolise the idea of the Divinity beloved as the child].

(22)

Love Yearning for the Divine

The eagerness and yearning of love are expressed *in the following hymn:*

क्रतूयन्ति क्रतवो हृत्सु धीतयो
वेनन्ति वेनाः पतयन्त्या दिशः ।
न मर्डिता विद्यते अन्य एभ्यो
देवेषु मे अधिकामा अयंसत ॥ ऋ. १०।६४।२

"In my heart thoughts and feelings agitate:
Love-yearnings proceed; they fly to all the regions.
No comforter exists other than These;
In the Gods are my highest longings fixed."

[From the spiritual point of view there is no difference in the Vedas between singular duel or plural of numbers, nor between the masculine feminine and neuter genders, in which the names of the Divinity may appear.]

(23)

Unity of the World in the Divine

One who realises the Divine as the Loving One finds the whole world united in Him. In the following verse of the *Yajur Veda* the sage, significantly named "Vena," (the loving one), sees such a vision:

वेनस् तत् पश्यन् निहित गुहा सद्
यत्र विश्व भवत्येकनीडम् ।
तस्मिन्निद ~ सच त्रि चैति सर्वं ~
स ओतः प्रोतश्च विभूः प्रजासु ॥ यजु. ३२।८

"The sage beholdeth that Mysterious Existence wherein all comes to have one home:

Therein unites and therefrom issues the whole:

That All-pervading One is warp and woof in created beings."

[Here we find all the typical ideas of mysticism,

First, the Divinity is a subject of personal experience [Vena *sees* That] Secondly, the ultimate conception of Divinity is that of a mystery (symbolically expressed as गुहानिहित]. *Thirdly, the abstract conception of the* Divine as an Essence, an Existence, is symbolised by the pronoun in neuter singular तत् qualifying the neuter abstract noun, सद्. The idea becomes concrete with the masculine विभूः in the next line Fourthly, in the Divine the whole universe is united in love, as birds in a nest (नीड, primary sense) or men in a home (नीड, secondary sense)].

The idea of the Divine presence as the underlying *power of unity is beautifully expressed by the metaphor* of warp and woof.

(24)

God the Lover

दोहेन गाम् उप शिक्षा सखाय
प्र बोधय जरितर् जारम् इन्द्रम् ।
कोश न पूर्णं वसुना न्यृष्टम्
आ च्यावय मघदेयाय शूरम् ।। ऋ १०।४२।२

" Draw thy Friend to thee like a cow to milking
O Singer, wake up God the Lover!
Move the Hero for the gift of bounty
Like the vessel filled brimful with treasure."

Here the word Lover (जार) has been used in a general sense. It has also been used in a particular sense to indicate the youthful gallant who loves a maiden:

जारः कनीन इव चक्षदानः। ऋ. १।११७।१८

"Bounteous as the lover of the maiden."

[The word जार has got a degraded meaning in certain modern Indian languages. In the Vedas it means just 'a lover'].

Not only the simile but also the metaphorical expression is found:

यमो ह जातो यमो जनित्वं
जारः कनीनां पतिर्जनीनाम्। ऋ. १।६६।४

"He is the Master of present and of future life: the Lover of maidens, the Husband of wives."

(25)

Like the Youth among Maidens

In the following verse the Divinity described as Soma is said to meet waters, (आपः) as a young man meets youthful maidens:

याभिः सोमो मोदते हर्षते च
कल्याणीभिर् युवतिभिर् न मर्यः।
ता अध्वर्यो अपो अच्छा परेहि
यद् आसिञ्चा ओषधीभिः पुनीतात्॥ ऋ १०।३०।५

The waters in whom the Deity delights and rejoices,
as a young man with graceful maidens,
Go to them, O worshipper,
And purify with herbs what thou hast sprinkled '

The adjective कल्याणी, *good, blissful, gracious,* applied to maidens, indicates the graceful nature of the relation

(26)

Like the Youth receiving Maidens' Homage.

The idea is continued in the verse following the one quoted above

एवेद् यूने युवतयो नमन्त
यद् ईम् उशन् उशतीर् एत्यच्छ ।
स जानते मनसा स चिकित्रे
ऽध्वर्यवो धिषणापश्च देवी ॥ ऋ १०।३०।६

"So do maidens bow before the youthful gallant
Who comes loving to them that yearn with love,
In heart accordant and in wish one minded
Are the worshippers and the divine Waters"

As the loving maidens bow before the loving gallant, so the loving hearts of men bow before the loving Divinity

Here the Divinity is named आपः, Waters

[In later religious literature we are told of the loving Divine Youth, Krishna of Vrindavan, and

maidens in love with him. The germ of this conception, as seen above, is found in the Veda].

The following analogy is that of the acceptance of a maiden by a youth :

> स्तोम जुषेथा युवशेव कन्यना
> विश्वेह देवौ सवनाव गच्छतम् ॥ ऋ ८।३५।५

" Accept our song of praise as a youth accepts a maid

O ye Twin Gods, receive all libations here "

[The Twin Gods are Asvins].

(27)

Like the Husband to the Wife.

The metaphor of the " husband of wives " has also *been expressed in detail, e. g. in the following* —

> अच्छा म इन्द्र मतयः स्वर्विदः
> सध्रीचीर् विश्वा उशतीर् अनूषत ।
> परि ष्वजन्ते जनयो यथा पतिं
> मर्यं न शुन्ध्युं मघवानम् ऊतये ॥ ऋ. १०।४३।१

" O God ! In perfect unison all yearning hymns of mine that have known the light have sung forth thy praise :

As wives embrace the husband, the comely bridegroom, so they encompass the Bountiful One for grace."

(28)

The Divine Magnetism

The attractions of love between the worshipper and the Deity have found fine comparisons in the following verse

गाव इव ग्राम युयुधिर् इवाश्वान्
वाश्रेव वत्स सुमना दुहाना ।
पतिरिव जायाम् अभि नो न्येतु
धर्ता दिवः सविता विश्ववारः ॥ ऋ. १०।१४९।४

"As kine turn to the village, as warriors to their steeds, as loving milk-giving cows to their calves;

As the husband to the wife, so may the Deity, the Upholder of the heavens, Lord of all bliss, turn towards us."

(29)

Like the Chaste Wife

In the following the Divinity has been compared to a chaste wife beloved of the husband

देवो न यः पृथिवीं विश्वधाया
उपक्षेति हितमित्रो न राजा ।
पुरः सदः शर्मसदो न वीरा
अनवद्या पतिजुष्टेव नारी ॥ ऋ. १।७३।३

"He who is like the *shining one* (sun), the supporter of the universe;

Who abides on earth like a king with good friends;

(31)

God the Friend

माकिर् न एना सख्या वि यौषुस्
तव चेन्द्र विमदस्य च ऋषेः।
विद्मा हि ते प्रमतिं देव जामि
वद् अस्मे ते सन्तु सख्या शिवानि ॥ ऋ.१०।२३।७

"Never may this friendship be severed
Of Thee, O Deity, and of the sage freed from passion
We know O God! Thy brother like love,
With us be Thy auspicious friendship.'

[विमद 'freed from passion,' has also been taken as a proper name]

The key note of this type of worship is the contemplation of friendly love [described in later religious literature as सख्य "friendliness"] between the Deity and the worshipper.

The following prayer is in the same spirit:

भवा नः सुम्ने अन्तमः
सखा वृधे ॥ ऋ. ८।१३।३

"Be Thou most near to us for bliss, a Friend to aid'

(32)

God the Guest

In the following stanza the Deity is described as "the dearest Guest".

प्रेष्ठं वो अतिथिं स्तुषे
मित्रम् इव प्रियम् ।
अग्निं रथं न वेद्यम् ॥ ऋ. ८।८४।१

"I laud the Deity, your dearest Guest,

Beloved as a friend,

Who brings [wealth] like the car."

Elsewhere He is spoken of as a "Bosom Friend" and "beloved Guest"

जुष्टो दमूना अतिथिर् दुरोणे । ऋ. ५।४।५
अ. ७।७३।९

"As dear House friend, Guest, beloved in the dwelling."

(33)

The Guest of Every Home

विश्वोविश्वो वो अतिथिं
वाजयन्तः पुरुप्रियम्
अग्निं वो दुर्यं वचः
स्तुषे शूषस्य मन्मभिः ॥ ८।७४।२

"Him who is your Guest in every home, the Deity, much beloved, your familiar Friend, may we glorify, exerting strength, in speech and with hymns of power."

As the Divine, the Deity is a Great One, Receiver of oblation; but from the human point of view He is a Guest among men to be treated with love.

विश्वेषाम् अदितिर् यज्ञियानां
विश्वेषाम् अतिथिर् मानुषाणाम् । ऋ. ४।१।२०
शु. य. ३३।१६

"He is Aditi (the Primal Being) among all receivers of oblations:

He is Atithi (a Guest) among all men."

(34)

"We are Thine"

वयं घा ते त्वे इद् विन्द्र विप्रा अपि ष्मसि ।
नहि त्वदन्यः पुरुहूत कश्चन मघवन्नस्ति मर्डिता ॥
ऋ. ८।६६।१३

"Verily, God! we are Thine, we worshippers depend on Thee.

There is none but Thee to show us grace, O Mighty One, much-invoked."

Here love is expressed by the term "we are Thine." In the following this sentiment is followed by "Thou art ours":

(35)

"And Thou art Ours"

त्वयेद् इन्द्र युजा वयं प्रति ब्रुवीमहि स्पृधः ।
त्वम् अस्माकं तव स्मसि ॥ ऋ. ८।९२।३२

"With Thee to help us, O God! may we answer all who defy us

Thou art ours and we are Thine."

(36)

"Had I been Thou"

Sometimes the worshipper takes up an attitude of loving impertinence as in the following

यद् अग्ने स्याम् अहं त्वं त्वं वा घा स्या अहम्।
स्युष्टे सत्या इहाशिषः॥ ऋ. ८।४४।२३

"If I were Thou and Thou wert I, O God!

Every prayer of Thine should have its due fulfilment here"

Here we find a typical expression of the spirit of *friendship* (सख्य) *in the path of devotion* (भक्ति).

(37)

"I will not sell Thee"

महे चन त्वाम् अद्रिवः परा शुल्काय देयाम्।
न सहस्राय नायुताय वज्रिवो न शताय शतामघ॥

ऋ. ८।१।५

"O God! I would not sell Thee for a great price,

Not for a thousand, nor for ten thousand, O Mighty One, nor for a hundred, O Lord of countless wealth!"

[This unwavering devotion among its followers must have saved the Vedic religion through thousands of years.]

ज्ञान-योग

THE PATH OF KNOWLEDGE

THE PATH OF KNOWLEDGE

We have considered above the Path of love and devotion (called भक्ति-मार्ग) We now turn to the Path of Knowledge (ज्ञान-मार्ग) in which what is prayed for is not शर्मन् (protection), अवस् (succour), मृळा (mercy), or प्रेम (love), but धी (intelligence, the instrument of knowledge, both material and spiritual), मेधा (talent), क्रतु (wisdom), दक्ष (efficiency) and qualities like these They represent the principle of light (ज्योतिः). The light of intellect is also called वर्चस्. The man of knowledge has been called in the Vedas विप्र (wise), कवि (poet-philosopher), ऋषि (sage), and by such other names

(38)

Prayer for Wisdom

The following is a prayer for wisdom

इन्द्र क्रतु न आ भर
पिता पुत्रेभ्यो यथा ।
शिक्षा णो अस्मिन् पुरुहूत यामनि
जीवा ज्योतिर् अशीमहि ॥ ऋ.७।३२।२६, सा.२५९,१४५६
अ. १८।३।६७, २०।७९।१

"God! give us wisdom as a father gives wisdom to his sons.

"Guide us, O Much-invoked, in this path. May we live and have light."

Here the Deity is invoked not for fatherly protection (शर्मन्) but for fatherly instruction and guidance (शिक्षा)

[The analogy as father gives wisdom to his sons shows that in the Aryan household the father was the teacher of children In Rgveda a woman sage prays

पितर इव शिक्षतम् । ऋ १०।३९।६

Instruct me like parents

Here the mother also is spoken of as an instructor]

(39)

Prayer for Mental Power

This path of knowledge is an essential part of the Vedic religion It is the path of the sage who never accepts faith or belief as a substitute for his personal realisation of the highest truth His is the prayer for knowledge for the power of the mind that leads to the realisation of the highest truth The following prayer (known as gayatri after the name of the metre) which has been repeated every day of their lives by generations of Hindus throughout the last four thousand years and more, is for this higher mental power (dhi) that leads to enlightenment

भुर् भुव स्व तत् सवितुर् वरेण्य भर्गो देवस्य धीमहि ।
धियो यो न प्रचोदयात् ॥ शु य ३६।३, २२।९, ३०।२
ऋ ३।६२।१०, सा १४६२

" We *contemplate* that noble light of the Deity,– that is in the earth, the sky, the heavens! May He stimulate our mental power '

[The first three words are additions made in the White Yajurveda 36 3 Usually *आम्* is added at the beginning of the prayer ओम् indicates the All pervading Eternal Spirit, the Ultimate Reality]

One reason why the 'gāyitri' is considered to be the most representative prayer in the Vedas is that it is a *prayer for the highest power* that man is capable of possessing—धी, higher intelligence—which brings him knowledge, material and transcendental What the eye is to the body, धी or intelligence is to the mind

Savita (सविता), as a name for the Divinity, symbolises the Power of Light The Divinity is the Power of Light beyond darkness

सो अन्धे चित् तमसि ज्योतिर् विदन् । ऋ. ११०•।८

' He knows the light amid blinding darkness.'

वेदाहम् एत पुरुष महान्तम्
आदित्यवर्णं तमस परस्तात् । शु. य ३१।१८

" I have known *This Great Being radiant* as the *sun beyond darkness* ".

[Note the वेदाहम्– ' I have known '– as typical of the man of knowledge (ज्ञानयोगी)]

In the following verse which occurs a number of times as a rafrain there is a prayer for victory through higher intelligence (धी):

धिया स्याम रथ्य: सदासा: । ऋ ४।१९-२४।११

"Through higher intelligence may we, car borne, be ever victorious"

The following is an exhortation to the people to seek क्रतु— power through knowledge and wisdom.

सखाय: क्रतुम् इच्छत । ऋ. ८।७०।१३

"Comrades! wish for wisdom (power)".

(42)

How a Brahman is Made

अहमेव स्वयम् इद वदामि
जुष्टं देवेभिर् उत मानुषेभि: ।
य कामये तंतम् उग्र कृणोमि
त ब्रह्माण तम् ऋषिं त सुमेधाम् ॥ ऋ १०।१२५।५

"I, verily, myself say this
Which is welcome to Gods and men
Him whom I love I make mighty
I make him a Brahman (wise man) a Rishi (seer), a man of talent."

[Here Vāk (वाक्) the Divine power as Speech and Wisdom speaks.]

The great man is he who has been divinely endo-

wed with wisdom and vision and genius. He is a sage, a seer (Rishi), a wise man (Brahman).

{ It will appear from the above that according to the Veda one who obtains the love of God becomes a sage, a seer, a Brahman. Any man of any race or tribe can do so Hence anybody through his higher intellectual gifts may become a Rishi and Brahman.

It is clear from the above that in the Vedic sense, a Brahman is *made* not *born* To be a Brahman is not to belong to a specially favoured caste, but *to be divinely inspired with wisdom*. An individual is a Brahman through his possession of this inspiration Hence one born in the family of a person who by his individual capacity was a Brahman does *not* become a Brahman by his birth. If he does not possess higher knowledge, he is not a Brahman at all]

{ The original word is ब्रह्मन्]

(43)

Encouragement of Knowledge and Valour

The greatness of a nation lies in combining knowledge and valour—ब्रह्म and क्षत्र. So the prayer

ब्रह्म जिन्वतम् उत जिन्वत धिय.

.. क्षत्र जिन्वतम् उत जिन्वत नृन् । ऋ ८।३५।१६,१७

"Arouse the power of knowledge and arouse intelligence,

Arouse the power of valour and arouse heroes."

One who possesses the power of knowledge—ब्रह्म—is a Brahman (ब्राह्मण) and one who possesses the power of valour—क्षत्र—is a Kshatriya (क्षत्रिय). These are qualitative terms, complementary to each other, and not descriptive terms referring to any tribe or caste.

(44)

Union of Knowledge and Valour

The Yajurveda glorifies the combination of these two powers— ब्रह्म (knowledge) and क्षत्र (valour, ruling power):

यत्र ब्रह्म च क्षत्रं च सम्यञ्चौ चरतः सह ।
तल्लोकं पुण्यं प्रज्ञेषं यत्र देवाः सहाग्निना ॥ यु. य. ७।२५

"Where knowledge and valour
accordant, move together—
That world I will know as holy—
a world where Shining Ones are with the Divine"

The Yajurveda also prays:

ब्रह्म दृꣳह क्षत्रं दृꣳह । यु. य. ६।३

"Strengthen knowledge,
Strengthen valour."

Such being the outlook of religion, the beginning of religious life is conceived to be an apprenticeship in knowledge and intellectual and moral development—in what has been called Brahma charya (ब्रह्मचर्य). It means a systematic course of self-discipline and education by which one qualifies for the higher spiritual life. In a

more particular way it is the process of self culture and sublimation of the sex impulse undertaken by the *student of old who aimed at Vedic learning and spiritual* knowledge The Atharva Veda devotes a long section to the glorification of the Brahmacharin The girl also is mentioned there among those who practise Brahmacharya

This is how the Vedic Path of knowledge leads to the conception of a "four fold' programme of life (आश्रम–विभाग) in which the first is to be devoted to systematic self-culture (ब्रह्मचर्य).

[In later times there arose *bhakti* cults that found this self culture and self-discipline –ब्रह्मचर्य–very exacting They therefore opposed the Vedic Path of Knowledge and prescribed a Path of Devotion divorced from intellectual brilliance and mental enlightenment]

(45)

Brahmacharya precedes Knowledge of Brahman

पूर्वो जातो ब्रह्मणो ब्रह्मचारी
घर्मं वसानस् तपसोदतिष्ठत् ।
तस्माज् जातं ब्राह्मणं ब्रह्म ज्येष्ठं
देवाश्च सर्वे अमृतेन साकम् ॥ अ ११।५।५

" The Brahmacharin (student of spiritual knowledge), born before brahman (spiritual knowledge), robed in libation, stood up through spiritual endeavour (tapas).

From him arose (i. e he revealed) sacred wisdom, (the knowledge of) the highest Brahman and of all the Shining Ones with life that lasts for ever"

Brahmacharya—a life of spiritual development and education—precedes the knowledge of the Divinity and the other higher things in religion This is the stand point of ज्ञानयाग (the path of knowledge) Here the practice of religion begins with self perfection

[Here also is the true significance of the doctrine of अधिकार, spiritual fitness to speak on higher things In this respect the Vedic attitude is one of spiritual modesty. There are modern people who, without any kind of fitness, speak glibly about God and soul and other spiritual matters As G B Shaw points out, there are people in society who would not stand up to speak about ordinary matters of science or history, but would talk with strange confidence about the Ultimate Reality.]

There is another point regarding this course of self culture In post-Vedic times, there have been differences of opinion regarding the Ultimate Reality, but none in respect of the essential need of this self-culture For example, Buddhism and Jainism that differed in metaphysical matters accepted this ideal of self culture Hence their opposition to the Veda was only partial The real opposition came from the Leftists — followers of the *Vama marga*, and extremist sects attached to the

bhakti cult who dismissed Brahmacharya or self culture as unnecessary, and set up the crude ignorant man of faith as the ideal worshipper of God

(46)

Power of the Brahmacharin

अर्वाग् अन्य परो अन्यो दिवस् पृष्ठात्
गुहा निधी निहितौ ब्राह्मणस्य ।
तौ रक्षति तपसा ब्रह्मचारी
तत् केवलं कृणुते ब्रह्म विद्वान् ॥ अ ११।५।१०

" One hither the other beyond heaven's ridge
two treasuries of sacred lore lie hidden
The Brahmacharin protects both these with his spiritual power (tapas),
knowing Brahman he makes all this his own "

The two types of knowledge — परा, infinite, and अपरा, finite — are subjects of search for the spiritual student Both these are, as *affecting religion*, mystic (गुहानिहितौ) and require spiritual fitness for their revelation

(47)

The Brahmacharin's Creation

The Brahmacharin, sublimating his sex energy, creates on the spiritual plane He vitalises the life of the *community* by the vigour of his spirit so it is said—

ब्रह्मचारी सिञ्चति सानौ रेत. पृथिव्या
तेन जीवन्ति प्रदिशश् चतस्रः ॥ अ ११।५।१२

" The Brahmacharin scatters his virile power on the ridge of the earth,

and by this live the four quarters "

This implies that the man of spiritual enlightenment and culture is at the centre of higher life. From him radiate spiritual energy and inspiration.

[The association of the sublimation of sex-energy with spiritual power is understood in fuller detail in modern times than it was before, owing to the new light thrown on the subject by psycho analysts led by Freud.]

(48)

The Spiritual Mother

The three day ceremony of initiation (उपनयन) is taken metaphorically to indicate a new spiritual birth :

आचार्य उपनयमानो
ब्रह्मचारिण कृणुते गर्भमन्तः ।
त रात्रीस् तिस्र उदरे बिभर्ति
त जात द्रष्टुम् अभि संयन्ति देवाः ॥ अ. ११।५।३

" The Acharya (teacher) *initiating the* Brahmacharin (pupil) takes him [as a mother the child] into his womb ,

Him for three nights he bears [like *the mother* the child] in his belly.

When he is born (i. e. is a new spiritual being) the Shining Ones convene to see him."

More clearly the passage will read—

"While the Acharya (teacher) initiates the Brahmacharin (pupil) he takes him in charge as the mother takes the child in the womb,

He carries him through three days as the mother carries the child through the period of pregnancy,

After initiation the pupil is a new being like the child born of the mother. He is a wonder, attracting the attention of the highest ranks of beings."

[The last line has an interesting significance in religious history. What is said here about the wonderful birth of the Brahmacharin, the new spiritual Personality of Man, has also been said in later religious history about the birth of great religious men like Buddha and Jesus. *Great men from distant places came to see them at their birth. The Magi came to see Jesus*

It appears, what the Veda had said hundreds of years ago became a tradition in religion and came to be attributed in later times to persons believed to be spiritually great.]

(49)

Brahmacharya a Divine Power.

According the conception of Jñanayoga, the Divinity has been spoken of as a follower of knowledge —a Brahmacharin, a sage.

ब्रह्मचर्येण तपसा देवा मृत्युम् अपाघ्नत ।
इन्द्रो ह ब्रह्मचर्येण देवेभ्य स्वर् आभरत् ॥ अ ११।५।१९

"By Brahmacharya and spiritual effort (tapas) the Shining Ones drove away *death from them*,

And Indra by Brahmacharya brought heavenly lustre *to the Shining Ones*."

(50)

God the Knower

In the *following* the Deity is described as पुरुविद्वान्, all-knowing:

शिक्षा न इन्द्र राय आ

पुरु विद्वाँ ऋचीषम् ।

अवा नः पार्ये धने ॥ ऋ. ८।९२।९

"Teach us, God, in power,

Thou Omniscient, adorable with hymns,

Help us in the decisive battle"

Here the Deity is spoken of as *Omniscient*, All-knowing, and prayed to, for instruction in knowledge that becomes power *or* wealth (राय).

In the following the Deity is spoken of metaphorically as a sage:

अग्निः शुचिव्रततमः

शुचिर् विप्रः शुचिः कविः ॥ ऋ. ८।४४।२१

"The Deity is Supreme among those who live the holy life. He is the holy sage, the holy Poet."

(51)

God the Poet

In the following God is spoken of as a Poet:

सुदक्षो दक्षैः क्रतुनासि सुक्रतुर्
अग्ने कविः काव्येनासि विश्ववित् ।
वसुर् वसूनां क्षयसि त्वम् एक इद्
द्यावा च यानि पृथिवी च पुष्यतः ॥ ऋ. १०।९१।३

"Most skilful with Thy powers, most wise with *wisdom*,

O God! Thou art a Poet knowing all with thy poetic wisdom

Master of good things Thou, the One, art the Lord of all good things,

Those that both heavens and the earth produce."

Take also the following.

कविः कवित्वा दिवि रूपम् आसजत् । ऋ. १०।१२४।७

"The Poet with poetic power has fixed His beauty in the sky."

(52)

The Poet of Poets

In a specific way the Deity of spiritual knowledge has been named the "Lord (पति) of spiritual wisdom" (ब्रह्मन्)—ब्रह्मणस्पति. The following is a prayer to Him:

गणानां त्वा गणपतिं हवामहे
कविं कवीनाम् उपमश्रवस्तमम् ।
ज्येष्ठराजं ब्रह्मणां ब्रह्मणस्पत
आ नः शृण्वन्नूतिभिः सीद सादनम् ॥ ऋ. २।२३।१

"We call on Thee, Lord and Leader of hosts,
the Poet of Poets, the most famous of all,
The Supreme King of spiritual knowledge, O Lord of spiritual wisdom!
listen to us with your graces, and sit in the place (of sacrifice)"

(53)

The Sagest of Poets

The following prayer is similar, though the name of the Divine, Indra (इन्द्र), is different

नि षु सीद गणपते गणेषु
त्वाम् आहुर् विप्रतमं कवीनाम् ।
न ऋते त्वत् क्रियते किं चनारे
महाम् अर्कं मघवन् चित्रम् अर्च ॥ ऋ १०।११२।९

"Lord of the people! be seated amid our people
Thee they call the Greatest Sage among Poets
Without Thee nothing is done, even far away
O mighty Lord, wondrous,
I worship Thee with a great hymn"

(54)

Knowledge of the Supreme is Essential.

ऋचो अक्षरे परमे व्योमन्
यस्मिन् देवा अधि विश्वे निषेदुः ।
यस्तन्न वेद किम् ऋचा करिष्यति
य इत् तद् विदुस् त इमे समासते ॥ ऋ. १।१६४।३९

"The Eternal, [the Subject] of the [Vedic] hymn, existing on the supreme region:

in which all Shining Ones have their being:

What will the [Vedic] hymn do for him who does not know That?

But those who have known That—they are perfect."

[For अक्षर, the Indestructible, Eternal, compare the Bhagavad Gita (which appears to refer to the above hymn):

यदक्षर वेदविदो वदन्ति । भ. गी. ८।११

"That which the knowers of the Veda speak of as Indestructible (अक्षर)."

Also note—

अक्षर ब्रह्म परमम् । भ. गी. ८।३

"The Indestructible (अक्षर) is the Supreme Being."
The word is also explained in the following:

द्वाविमौ पुरुषौ लोके क्षरश् चाक्षर एव च ।
क्षर. सर्वाणि भूतानि कूटस्थोऽक्षर उच्यते ॥ भ गी. १५।१६

"There are two orders of beings in this world the destructible and the indestructible,

The destructible is all living beings the Supreme is called the indestructible (अक्षर) "

The word is also used elsewhere in the Gita [E g VIII 21, XII, 3]

Regarding परमे व्योमन्— the supreme plane of existence, compare the following

यो अस्याध्यक्ष. परमे व्योमन् । ऋ. १०।१२९।७

"*He who oversees all this in the supreme region*"

This verse asserts the indespensability of the knowledge of the Divine in the higher spiritual life This is the central point in ज्ञानयोग, the Path of knowledge This is also the central significance of the Vedas Veda, from *vid*, to know, means knowledge According to the Vedas, it is the knowledge of God that matters, and not the word of the Veda (ऋक्). The word is nothing if knowledge does not follow. Here the Veda itself says that the mere memorising of the Vedic hymn is of no spiritual value [Here we find opposition to the Path of Formalism (कर्मकाण्ड) in the sense that कर्मकाण्ड (karma-kānda) believes in the efficacy of the Vedic word itself as mantra, (मन्त्र) independently of its meaning]

The Bhagavad Gita strongly opposes the theory of Karma Kānda and looks down upon people who are attached only to the word of the Veda

वेदवादरता पार्थ नान्यद् अस्तीति वादिनः ।

भ गी २।४२

"(Those unwise people) who rejoice in the letter of the Vedas, O Partha, saying 'There is naught but this' " The Gita asserts in an emphatic way

यावानर्थ उदपाने सर्वत सम्प्लुतोदके ।
तावान् सर्वेषु वेदेषु ब्राह्मणस्य विजानत ॥ भ. गी २।४६

"What use there is of a tank in a place flooded over with water, so much in all the Vedas is the use for a knower of the Ultimate Reality (ब्राह्मण), equipped with his higher knowledge (विज्ञान) '

This criticism is in keeping with the Rigvedic verse quoted above

Note, however, the distinction made by Gita between वेदवादरता, —'these who rejoice in the letter of the Veda', and वेदविद्, 'those who *know* the Veda'

That the Ultimate Reality (अक्षर) is the subject of the Vedic hymn (ऋक्) has been recognised in all ages in India Note the line quoted above

यदक्षर वेदविदो वदन्ति । भ गी ८।११

" That which the knowers of the Veda speak of as the Indestructible

Note also

वेदैश्च सर्वैर् अहम् एव वेद्य । भ गी १७।१८

" And that which is to be known in all the Vedas am I (i e the Supreme Being) '

Even in the middle ages, a popular interpreter of religion, Dnyaneshwar says

ॐ नमो जी आद्या ।

वेदप्रतिपाद्या । ज्ञानेश्वरी १।१

" I bow to the Primal, Supreme Being whose existence is established by the Veda "

It should also be carefully noted that the concep tion of God as **the Eternal Existence** (अक्षर), form less and abodeless a transcendental Power beyond all material reality, is an idea found only in the Veda and in literature derived from the Veda (like Āranyaka, Brahmana, Upanisad etc) and in no other religious literature In certain non-Vedic rel gions the Supreme Being is a Person with His abode in heaven Again, in those rel gions God has an anti God or Satan (a Hebrew word meaning 'an adversary') and hence His existence (metaphysically speaking) is limited by that of a rival

Thus the idea of God as an eternal and absolute Existence is peculiar to the Vedic religion and philoso phy An idea similar to this appeared in western philosophy in Germany only as late as the later 18th century

राजयोग

THE PATH OF MYSTICISM

This takes us to the loftiest heights of philosophy.

It is doubtful whether the human mind even afterwards surpassed these heights.

(59)

The One is Many

In recognising unity in diversity, mysticism does not reject the diversity. For it, the One is Many, and the Many are One. It is here that mysticism pays scant regard to arithmetic or logic.

एक एवाग्निर् बहुधा समिद्ध
एकः सूर्यो विश्वम् अनु प्रभूतः ।
एकैवोषाः सर्वम् इद वि भा-
त्येक वा इद वि बभूव सर्वम् ॥ ऋ ८।५८।२
[वालखिल्य १०।२]

One is Agni kindled in many a spot ;
One is Surya shining over all ,
One is Ushas illumining all this.
That which is One has become this All.

While speaking of the different visions of the Ultimate Reality, masculine (as in the cases of Agni and Surya) and feminine (as in the case of Ushas) genders have been used. But for the Ultimate Reality-the One-the neuter gender (एकम्) has been used.

(60)

That (तद्) representing All

Similarly in the following, "That" in the neuter (तद्),

has been used for the Ultimate Reality of which Deities (देवता) like Agni, Vāyu and *others represent different* aspects and with which, therefore, the latter are identical.

तद् एवाग्निस् तद् आदित्यस्
  तद् वायुस् तद् उ चन्द्रमा: ।
तद् एव शुक्रस् तद् ब्रह्म
  ताऽआपः स: प्रजापति: ॥

शु. य. (वा), अ. ३२।१

"Agni is but That, Aditya is That,
  Vayu is That, Chandramas is That.
Light is That, Brahman is That,
  Apah (Waters) are Those, Prajapati is He."

Here it is made clear that the gender and number of the names of the Divinity are of no account; all stand for the Ultimate Being. Thus to accommodate the plural Deities, Apah (Waters), "That" is turned into "Those", and to indicate the *masculine name*, Prajapati (*Lord of Creation*), "That' changes into the masculine "He" (स:).

[The Svetāśvatara Upanishad tries to be more grammatical and logical by changing "Those" in the feminine and "He" in *the masculine into* 'That" (तद्) *in the neuter. It changes the last section of the* verse into

तद् आपस् तत् प्रजापति: । श्वेताश्वतर उ. ८।२

"Apah (Waters) are That, Prajapati (Lord of Creation) is That]

(61)

The One Deity

In the following the Deity (in the masculine) is described as the One

सुपर्णं विप्रा. कवयो वचोभिर्
एकं सन्तं बहुधा कल्पयन्ति । ऋ १०।११४।५

'The wise poets with their words imagine the Deity, [lit 'the Fine winged (Bird)] who is One, in many ways'

Note 'Fine-winged' (Bird) is as said above, a symbol for the Divinity

(62)

All Deities are One Deity

In the following we find a non-symbolic expression of the unity of all Deities who are but aspects of the Same

त्वम् अग्न इन्द्रो वृषभ सताम् असि
त्वं विष्णुर् उरुगायो नमस्य ।
त्वं ब्रह्मा रयिविद् ब्रह्मणस्पते
त्वं विधर्तं सचसे पुरन्ध्या ॥ ३ ॥ ऋ २।१
त्वम् अग्ने राजा वरुणो धृतव्रतस्
त्वम् मित्रो भवसि दस्म ईड्य ।
त्वम् अर्यमा सत्पतिर् यस्य सम्भुजं
त्वम् अंशो विदथे देव भाजयु ॥ ४ ॥ ऋ २।१

THE PATH OF MYSTICISM

There is a stage in the Path of Knowledge, ज्ञानयोग, where the knowledge of the Divine is not mere philosophy, the result of a process of thought, it is experience. This has been called Rāja yoga (राजयोग), the Path of Mysticism, which is the path of spiritual realisation. Here the sage speaks of his own personal experience of the Divine.

It is usual to speak of the truth that has been realised in this way as प्राप्त, 'obtained'. The Veda describes the following process by which truth is *obtained*

(55)

Stages of Spiritual Realisation

व्रतेन दीक्षाम् आप्नोति
दीक्षयाप्नोति दक्षिणाम् ।
दक्षिणा श्रद्धाम् आप्नोति
श्रद्धया सत्यम् आप्यते । शु य १९।३०

"By self-dedication one obtains consecration, by consecration one obtains grace
By grace one obtains reverence, and by reverence is Truth obtained."

Here the preparation for *obtaining* truth is not simple *brahmacharya*, the building up of character and the sublimation of the sex-energy, it is more. It is a process of steady spiritual growth till one is fitted to face Truth in its supreme splendour.

By earnest determination one dedicates oneself to higher ideals and through this self-dedication (व्रत) one enters spiritual life (दीक्षा) and achieves spiritual refinement and grace (दक्षिणा). This leads to the development of the quality of reverence (श्रद्धा), through which one is finally led to the possession of ultimate Truth (सत्य).

(56)

Experience of the Supreme

Thus in mystic realisation, there is the direct experience of the Supreme, the sage speaks in terms of his own personal knowledge.

वेदाहम् एत पुरुष महान्तम्
आदित्यवर्ण तमस. परस्तात् ।
तम् एव विदित्वातिमृत्युम् एति
नान्य. पन्था विद्यत अयनाय ॥ शु. य ३१।१८

"I have known this Mighty Being
refulgent as the sun beyond darkness;
By knowing Him alone one surpasses death,
there is no other way to go"

Here the "I have known" is of extreme value, because it is not the expression of an opinion but the statement of an experience.

Considering the content of the revelation, we find that the *Ultimate Reality* is compared to light and the finite and material reality to darkness.

[The Bhagavad Gita quotes part of this verse
सर्वस्य धातारम् अचिन्त्यरूपम्
आदित्यवर्णं तमसः परस्तात् ॥ भ गी ८।९

"(He who thinketh upon) the Supporter of all, of form unimaginable, refulgent as the sun beyond darkness]

[There is a tradition to consider the Vedic Samhita as karma-kānda (i e mere mantra and sound) and trace verses like these which have been borrowed by Upanishads, to Upanishads and not to the Vedas Not only is this practice scholastically erroneous, but also practically so As *spiritual revelation, the original* alone has the true value. The Vedic sage who first says, वेदाहम्— I have known , is the person speaking from *experience* the Upanishadic sage who borrows the expression, speaks from श्रुति— the Veda—a fact that must have been quite clear to his contemporaries

One who understands this will find how childish it is of those who believe that the Vedas were primitive and materialistic and the Upanishads advanced and spiritual]

If religion means the overcoming of the limits of finite life and projecting the soul into the infinite, then *there can be no real religion without this spiritual* realisation (नान्यः पन्था विद्यते अयनाय)

(57)

The One Divine Existence

To the mystic's vision the Ultimate Being is **One.** [This unity of the Divine idea we may call **Unitheism** as distinguished from Monotheism—which believes in a God in heaven surrounded by other beings like angels and archangels and having a rival, the anti God or Satan]. And this is a special feature of Mysticism. It discovers the final and ultimate unity, beyond all plurality The following verse gives the idea of this unity of the Divine Existence

इन्द्र मित्रं वरुणम् अग्निम् आहुर्
अथो दिव्यः स सुपर्णो गरुत्मान् ।
एक सद् विप्रा बहुधा वदन्त्य-
ग्नि यम मातरिश्वानम् आहुः ॥ ऋ. १।१६४।४६

"They speak of Indra, Mitra, Varuna, Agni, and there is the Divine Fine winged Garutmat.
The One Existence the wise call by many names as Agni, Yama, Matariswan."

Here the Ultimate Reality is described as एकं सद्, One Existence.

[सुपर्ण, Fine winged (Bird), is a mystical symbol in the Veda for the Ultimate Reality.]

[The Bhagavad Gita echoes this verse when it says about the Supreme Being :

त्वम् अग्ने अदितिर् देव दाशुषे
त्वं होत्रा भारती वर्धसे गिरा ।
त्वम् इळा शतहिमासि दक्षसे
त्वं वृत्रहा वसुपते सरस्वती ॥ ऋ. २।१।११

"Thou O Agni ! art *Indra, the Hero of heroes.*
Thou art Vishnu of the mighty stride, adorable.
Thou, O Brahmanaspati, art Brahman who knows power,
Thou, O Sustainer, tendest us with wisdom (3)
"Thou, O Agni, art King Varuna whose laws stand fast;
Thou as Mitra, wonder-worker, art adorable,
Thou art Aryaman, Lord of heroes, encircling all;
O Thou God ! Thou liberal Ansha in the synod. (4)
Thou, God *Agni*, art *Aditi to the offerer of oblation;*
Thou, Hotra Bharati, art glorified by the song,
For conferring power, Thou art the hundred-wintered Ila;
Thou, Lord of wealth, art Vritra-slayer and Saraswati." (11)

Here Agni has been identified generally with all other *Deities, male and female. This implies that* all Deities (देवता) stand for One Divine Being. These verses in detail say the same as Rig. I.164.46 [No. 57] or S. Yaj. 32.1 [*No. 60*] which *identify* all Deities with One Divine Essence.

(63)

God is One

All Deities being One, there is no contradiction in saying that Any of Them is The One. In the following and many other verses Indra is spoken of as The One

यः एको अस्ति दस्मा
महा उग्रो अभि व्रतैः । ऋ. ८।१।२७

"He who is One, wonderful, mighty and strong by holy laws"

इन्द्र इत् सोमपा एक
इन्द्रः सुतपा विश्वायुर्
अन्तर् देवान् मर्त्यांश्च । ऋ ८।२।४

"Indra is the One Drinker of libation,
Indra, Drinker of the pressed juice, Life of all,
Among celestials and mortals"

स विश्वस्य करुणस्येश एकः । ऋ १।१००।७

"He is the One Lord of all holy service"

अयम् एक इत्था पुरू रु चष्टे वि विश्पतिः
तस्य व्रतान्यनु वश्चरामसि ॥ ऋ ८।२५।१६

"Here this One God, the Lord of men, looks forth exceeding far and wide, and we, for your welfare, observe His holy laws"

(64)

The Nonpareil

There is no equal, no parallel to Him

न तस्य प्रतिमा अस्ति

यस्य नाम महद् यशः । शु. य. ३२।३

"There is no parallel to Him whose glory, verily, is great."

(65)

The Model for All

यो विश्वस्य प्रतिमानं बभूव

यो अच्युत-च्युत् स जनास इन्द्रः । ऋ. २।१२।९

"*He who is the Model for all,*
He who shakes the unshaken,
He, O men, is God"
[*Here Indra is the name of the Divinity*]

(66)

All Gods in One

In the *following* verse the Rigveda describes the mystical nature of the conception of *Deities*:

को अद्धा वेद क इह प्र वोचद्

देवाँ अच्छा पथ्या ३ का समेति ।

ददृश्र एषाम् अवमा सदांसि

परेषु या गुह्येषु व्रतेषु ॥ ऋ. ३।५४।५

"Who knows this truly and who will now declare it—
What paths lead *together to* the Gods?
Only the lowest aspect of the existence of *Those* is seen,
Who exist on supreme, mystical planes"

The first half-line occurs in Rig. X. 129. 4. also—

को अद्धा वेद क इह प्र वोचद्

The query there leads to the final Mystery of the Universe. As the question is the same here, so there is also unity in the spirit of the reply

It is said in the same hymn that there is "One All", pervading everything

एजद् ध्रुव पत्यत विश्वम् एक

चरत् पतत्रि विषुण वि जातम् ॥ ऋ ३।५४।८

"One All is Lord of the moving and the steady, of what walks, what flies—this multiform creation"

[One All, विश्वम् एकम्, is in the neuter gender implying One Divine All embracing Essence].

Thus All Gods are ONE ALL—One in Many, One having many aspects Hence according to this conception, to say "Ye All Gods" (विश्वे देवाः) and to say "Thou All-God" (विश्वदेव) as well as to call any God "All God" (विश्वदेव) are to imply the same meaning. Because "They All" stand ultimately for the ONE Essence (एकम्).

Note here the mystical indifference to quantity and and number in respect of the Ultimate.

Similarly, take the following refrain of a hymn

महद् देवानाम् असुरत्वम् एकम् । ऋ ३।५५।१–२२

"*Great and single* is the Divinity of the Gods."

In the following All Deities become One in Indra :

> महत् तद् वः कवयश्चारु नाम
> यद्ध देवा भवथ विश्व इन्द्रे ।
> सख ऋभुभिः पुरुहूत प्रियेभिर्
> इमा धियं सातये तक्षता नः ॥ ऋ ३।५४।१७

"That is, Ye Poets! your great and lovely title— that All Ye Deities exist in Indra.
O Friend, much invoked! Thou art with thy dear Ribhus
frame ye this our hymn for our welfare."

(67)

One without a Second, a Third

> य एत देवम् एकवृत वेद । १५
> न द्वितीयो न तृतीयश् चतुर्थो नाप्युच्यते । १६
> न पञ्चमो न षष्ठः सप्तमो नाप्युच्यते । १७
> नाष्टमो न नवमो दशमो नाप्युच्यते । १८
> स सर्वस्मै वि पश्यति यच्च प्राणति यच्च न । १९
> तमिदं निगतं सहः स एष एक एकवृद् एक एव । २०
> सर्वे अस्मिन् देवा एकवृतो भवन्ति । २१
>
> अ० १३।४

"To him who knows this God simply as One
Neither second nor third nor fourth is He called.
Neither fifth nor sixth nor seventh is He called
Neither eighth nor ninth nor tenth is He called.

He oversees all—what breathes and what breathes not.

To him goes the conquering (supreme) power He is the One, the One Alone.

In Him All Deities become One Alone"

(68)

One in Many

तावांस्ते मघवन् महिमोपो ते तन्वः शतम् ॥ ४४
उपो ते बध्वे बद्धानि यदि वासि न्यर्बुदम् ॥ ४५

अ. १३।४

"Such is Thy greatness, O Liberal Lord ! a hundred bodily forms are Thine.

Millions are in Thy million, or Thou art a billion in Thyself"

(69)

The Formless.

स पर्यगाच् छुक्रम् अकायम् अव्रणम् अस्नाविरँ शुद्धम् अपापविद्धम् ।
कविर् मनीषी परिभुः स्वयम्भूर् याथातथ्यतोऽर्थान् व्यदधाच् छाश्वतीभ्यः समाभ्यः ॥ —यजु. (वा.) ४०।८

He [the Divine Being] pervades (everything).

It [the Divine Essence] is bright, unbodied, unwounded, unsinewed, pure, unpenetrated by evil.

He, the Poet, the Wise, the (all) encompassing,

the self existent,—has prescribed aims, according to fundamental principles, unto the everlasting eyars."

In this prose passage the masculine and neuter expressions for the Divinity are mixed up. The passage has a philosophical vein, more typical of the Upanishad than of the Veda. Quite characteristically the chapter of Yajurveda containing this passage has been taken separately as an Upanishad (*Ishopanishad*).

(70)

The All-pervading

We find a more typically Vedic expression of the same idea in the following.—

यः समाम्यो ३ वरुणो यो व्याम्यो ३
यः सदेश्यो ३ वरुणो यो विदेश्यः।
यो दैवो वरुणो यश्च मानुषः॥ अ. ४।१६।८

"God is That in which things converge, He is That from which things diverge
God is the Compatriot, He is the Stranger.
God is Divine, He is also Human."
[Here Varuna is the name of the Divinity].

In the verse quoted above the all pervasiveness of the Divinity is indicated by the application of mutually opposite terms, beginning with सम् and वि, implying union and opposition, respectively.

[The description of God as "Compatriot" (संदेश्य i. e. समदेश्य) and "Foreigner" (विदेश्य) is significant. According to narrow religious views only the members of one's own group or locality are considered as favourites of God and outsiders are regarded as heathens, infidels etc enjoying no Divine bliss But according to the Veda, God is as much your own as another's, *to be foreign is not to be un Godly or God forsaken*]

Again, it is a characteristic of mysticism to seek 'God in God,' 'God in man' and 'God in Nature.' Here the dual idea of 'God in God' and 'God in man' is expressed by the terms दैव (divine) and मानुष (human)

(71)

God in the Ocean and in the Drop

In the following verse we have the idea of Divine all pervasiveness expressed in terms of space. God is in the vast, He is in the little. In fact, in the mystic conception, space, like number or time or causality, is of no account.

उतेय भूमिर् वरुणस्य राज्ञ
उतासौ द्यौर् बृहती दूरेअन्ता ।
उतो समुद्रौ वरुणस्य कुक्षी
उतास्मिन्नल्प उदके निलीन: ॥ अ. ४।१६।३

" This earth is the possession of God, the King,
and the high heaven whose ends are far asunder,
And both the seas are His loins,
and He lies in this small drop of water "
[Varuna is the Deity here]

[This idea is expressed in the Upanished in the peculiar Upanishadic style

अणोरणीयान् महता महीयान् ॥ कठ, २।४९

" (The Ātman) is smaller than the small and greater than the great

The Bhagavad Gita expresses the idea of God in the minute—

अणोरणीयासम्— भ. गी. ८।९

" Minuter than the minute "]

(72)

God is Everywhere

The following concrete expression of the all pervasiveness of the Divine is typically Vedic

यस् तिष्ठति चरति यश्च वञ्चति
यो निलायं चरति यः प्रतङ्कम् ।
द्वौ संनिषद्य यन्मन्त्रयेते
राजा तद् वेद वरुणस् तृतीयः ॥ अ ४।१६।२

" Whoever stands or walks or who moves in secret,
who goes to his lying down or his uprising;
What two men, sitting together, whisper to each other,

all that God, the King, knows He is the Third* present there"

(73)

The All-seeing

सर्वं तद् राजा वरुणो वि चष्टे
यद् अन्तरा रोदसी यत् परस्तात् ।
संख्याता अस्य निमिषो जनानाम्
अक्षानिव श्वघ्नी नि मिनोति तानि ॥ अ. ४।१६।५

"All that God, the King, beholds — what lies between the heavens and what is beyond them,

He has counted the twinklings of men's eye-lids,

As the dice player the dice, so He lays down His statutes"

(74)

He is in Every Direction

The following is also a typically Vedic and concrete expression of the idea of Divine all pervasiveness.

सविता पश्चातात् सविता पुरस्तात्
सवितोत्तरात्तात् सविताधरात्तात् ।
सविता नः सुवतु सर्वताति
सविता नो रासतां दीर्घम् आयुः ॥ ऋ १०।३६।१४

"The Deity from westward, the Deity from eastward
the Deity from northward, the Deity from southward,
May He send us all bliss, may He grant us long life."

[The Deity is Savita]

(75)

The Divinity in Every Order of Reality

अदितिर् द्यौर् आदितिर् अन्तरिक्षम्
अदितिर् माता स पिता स पुत्रः ।
विश्वे देवा अदिति पञ्चजना
अदितिर् जातम् अदितिर् जनित्वम् ॥
ऋ. १।८९।१० य. २५।२३ अ ७।६।१

" The Divinity is the heaven, the Divinity is the mid-religion,

the Divinity is the Mother, the Father, the Son,

The Divinity is All Deities the Divinity is the five classed men,

the Divinity is all that is born and will be born "

Here the Divinity is conceived as feminine Aditi (अदिति). She has elsewhere been described as the Mighty Mother [मातर महीम् आदितिं नाम, यजु. ९।५] and as the Motherliest (मातृतमा, ऋ. ६।५०।७)

The Divinity is the underlying Spirit in Nature, in human relations the unitary Principle in the multiple Deities (देव) and in the multiple humanity (the tribes or nations) and the Divine Power unites the universe not only in terms of space, but also in terms of time, pervading the past, *the present* and *the future.*

[The Divinity as the Feminine Power or Spirit became the object of worship in Tantra. Compare the

following in *Chandi*, where the above idea is expressed in different language:

या देवी सर्वभूतेषु मातृरूपेण संस्थिता।
नमस्तस्यै नमस्तस्यै नमस्तस्यै नमो नमः॥

"The Goddess who exists in all beings as Mother, obeisance to Her! Obeisance to Her! Obeisance to Her, Obeisance! Obeisance!"]

(76)

God in Man

तस्माद् वै विद्वान् पुरुषम् इदं ब्रह्मेति मन्यते।
सर्वा ह्यस्मिन् देवता गावो गोष्ठ इवासते॥ अ. ११।८।३२

"Therefore one who knows man regards him as this Brahman

Verily all Deities abide in him as cows in the pen."

Here the neuter singular "Brahman" [the Divinity] and the masculine plural, "Deities" (देवताः) are synonymous terms.

The following are from the Rigveda:

देवासो हि ष्मा मनवे समन्यवो
विश्वे साकं सरातयः। ऋ. ८।२७।१४

"For of one spirit are the Gods with mortal men, Co-sharers all of gracious gifts."

प्र भ्रातृत्वं सुदानवोऽध द्विता समान्या।
मातुर् गर्भे भरामहे॥ ऋ. ८।८३।८

O Bounteous Ones! from time of old,

We have established our brotherhood and our union, in the mother's womb "

(77)

God in Male and Female, in Youth and Old

The idea of God in Man is particularised in a poetic way in the following:

त्वं स्त्री त्वं पुमान् असि
त्वं कुमार उत वा कुमारी ।
त्वं जीर्णो दण्डेन वञ्चसि
त्वं जातो भवसि विश्वतो मुखः॥ अ. १०।८।२७

"O God (*Brahman*)! Thou art woman, Thou art man, Thou art the boy, Thou the maiden

Thou art the old man tottering with the staff;

Thou existest in all forms "

[There have been faiths in post-Vedic times in India and abroad which consider the woman as inferior to man, and the girl as inferior to the boy The Veda states clearly that they are equal and equally endowed with the Divine spark in them.

Note the graceful precedence given to woman]

(78)

The All-pervading Being
(पुरुष)

The idea of the Divinity as an all pervading Being has been expressed in grand language in the "Purusha"

hymn of the Veda. And in that hymn the mystical conception of the Many in One finds a remarkable illustration. The Purusha hymn occurs in all the four Vedas. [Rigveda X. 90, Samaveda 613, Yajurveda (V.S.) XXXI, Atharvaveda XIX. 6.]

The Divinity Immanental in the Universe: in Terms of Space

सहस्रशीर्षा पुरुषः सहस्राक्षः सहस्रपात् ।
स भूमिं विश्वतो वृत्वा ऽत्यतिष्ठद् दशाङ्गुलम् ॥
ऋ. १०।९०।१, यजु. साम, अथर्व.

"The Supreme Being, Thousand headed,
Thousand-eyed, Thousand footed,
He, pervading the earth on all sides, exists in the ten directions."

'Thousand' (सहस्र) means 'innumerable.' Hence there is no arithmetical coherence between head and hands. The Atharvaveda, however, attempts such coherence by reading—

सहस्रबाहुः पुरुषः । अ. १९।६।१

"The Supreme Being, thousand handed."

"Thousand headed" etc. imply the manifestation of the Divinity though the vastness of creation. दशाङ्गुलम् — "Ten fingers"— are the ten directions or regions. [Compare the "ten surrounding arms" in the following.—

इय या नाच्यविणा रुपा राहिण्या कृता ।
चित्रेव प्रत्यदर्यायत्यन्तर्दशसु बाहुषु ॥ ऋ ८।१०१।१३

"She (Ushas) yonder bending low, rich in rays, clad in red hues,

Is seen advancing like one wonderful, amid the *ten surrounding arms*"]

(79)

The Divinity Immanental in the Universe. in Terms of Time

पुरुष एवेद सर्वं यद् भूत यच्च भव्यम् ।
उतामृतत्वस्येशानो यद् अन्नेनातिरोहति ॥ ऋ १०।९०।२

Purusha is all that has been and that will be
And He is the Lord of immortality which transcends through matter (food)

Here the Divinity is described as all pervading in respect of time—He pervades the past and the future, just as in the present, in respect of space He pervades all regions (ten quarters) अन्न is food, material sustenance When we contemplate the Absolute existing in space and time, we find His Being glorified through the world of matter and phenomena just as the body of man prospers through food

Thus the Divine as Purusha makes the material universe a means of Self expression The Divine manifests His glory through creation.

[In later religious ideology this Purusha conception is represented by that of Bhagwad—the Lord of splendour (भग=splendour). The speciality about this conception is that, instead of the neutral (निरुपाधि) Absolute (अक्षर), the God of qualities (ईश्वर) is contemplated. So in this conception, the beauty and splendour of the universe and man are part of the glory (उपाधि) of the Divine. Hence matter is not alien to God, the finite world of time and space only manifests the splendour of God.]

(80)

God is Greater than His Splendour

एतावान् अस्य महिमाऽतो ज्यायांश्च पुरुषः ।
पादोऽस्य विश्वा भूतानि त्रिपादस्यामृतं दिवि ॥ ऋ १०।९०।३

"Such [that He pervades all space and time] is His splendour, but Purusha is greater than this.
All beings are a quarter of Him; three quarters make the immortality in the supreme region."

This verse implies that the *Divinity* is not co-extensive with the universe or creation. The splendour of the universe is only an aspect of Him; He has other aspects that are unmanifested and transcendental.

The arithmetical 'one-quarter' and 'three-quarters' are not to be taken literally, in the quantitative sense.

(81)

Creation, a Grand Sacrifice

What is God's creation? In what relation does He stand to it? It is not like the making of a pot by the potter. It is through a spiritual act—a sacrifice—through which *the Absolute* (अक्षर) *reveals Its splendour.*

The idea of sacrifice has been poetically worked out in the Veda.

यत् पुरुषेण हविषा देवा यज्ञम् अतन्वत ।
वसन्तो अस्यासीद् आज्यं ग्रीष्म इध्म शरद्धविः ।

ऋ १०।९०।६

"Of the yajña (sacrifice) that the Shining Ones prepared with Purusha as the libation,
Spring was the butter, summer the wood and *autumn the offering*."

Here it is said that creation proceeds from yajña (sacrifice). Elsewhere in the Rigveda it is said that creation proceeds from tapas (spiritual striving).

ऋतं च सत्यं चाभीद्धात् तपसोऽध्यजायत ।

ऋ १०।१९०।१

"Eternal Order and Truth were born of perfect spiritual striving."

In the Atharva veda yajña is classified with tapas as a power that upholds the earth:

सत्यं बृहद् ऋतम् उग्रं दीक्षा तपो ब्रह्म यज्ञः पृथिवीं धारयन्ति ।

अ. १२।१।१

"Truth, order that is great and stern, consecration, spiritual striving, prayer, sacrifice—these uphold the earth."

Thus yajña as the means of creation indicates the spiritual nature of the latter. Creation is not mechanical construction; it is a supreme spritual act *revealing* Divine splendour.

(82)

The Divine Architect

विश्वकर्मन्

The Divine Architect — विश्वकर्मन् — is but another aspect of Purusha — the Divinity manifested through creation. The Veda applies similar terms to Viswakarman, but there is a slight difference. The Vishvakarman hymns emphaise the Divine Personality as the One God

विश्वतश्चक्षुर् उत विश्वतोमुखो
विश्वतोबाहुर् उत विश्वतस्पात् ।
स बाहुभ्यां धमति स पतत्रैर्
द्यावाभूमी जनयन् देव एकः ॥

ऋ. १०।८१।३, अ. १३।२।२६
शु. य. १७।१९

"He who has eyes on all sides and mouth on all sides,
arms on all sides and feet on all sides:
He, the One God, *producing* heaven and earth,
wields them together with his arms as wings."

The Vedic verse quoted above also appears in the Svetaśvatara Upanishad (श्वेताश्वतरोपनिषद्), III. 14. The following verse there, coming after three expository verses on the Vedic conception of the Purusha may be taken as explaining the mystical secret of the Purusha—that He may also be described in opposite terms as having no feet, no eyes etc:

अपाणिपादो जवनो ग्रहीता
पश्यत्यचक्षुः स शृणोत्यकर्णः।
स वेत्ति वेद्यं न च तस्यास्ति वेत्ता
तम् आहुर् अग्र्यं पुरुषं महान्तम् ॥

श्वेताश्वतरोपनिषत् ३।१९

"Without hands and feet, he grasps and walks; without eyes he sees, without ears, he hears.
He knows what is knowable, but there is no knower of Him.
Him they have called the Great Primal Being (Purusha)"

(83)

The Nest of All Beings

From the idea of the One Creator we come to another mystic conception—the unity of the universe in Him:

वेनस् तत् पश्यन् निहितं गुहा सद्
यत्र विश्वं भवत्येकनीडम्।
तस्मिन्निदं सं च वि चैति सर्वं
स ओतः प्रोतश्च विभुः प्रजासु॥

शु. य. ३२।८

"The *loving sage beholds that mysterious* Existence
wherein the universe comes to have one nest,
Therein unites and therefrom emanates all.
The Lord is the warp and woof in the created beings."

In this verse the Divinity has been spoken of both as the Ultimate Essence, in the neuter gender, as तत् सत्—That Existence, and as the Lord, in the masculine—विभुः.

गुहानिहितम्, 'hidden in the cave', is a symbolical expression for "mystical" or "mysterious."

[With 'The Lord is warp and woof in created things', compare Bhagavad Gita

मयि सर्वम् इदं प्रोतं सूत्रे मणिगणा इव।

भ. गी ७।७

"All this is threaded in Me (the Divine) as pearls on a string." The word प्रोत is common between the passages.]

In the Atharva Veda (Ch II. I 1), instead of the bold poetic metaphor, एकनीडम् – 'one nest'—there is the more philosophical एकरूपम् – 'one form,' 'alike' Presumably the Atharva Veda replaced the poetic metaphor by a philosophical *expression* (*though some orientalists think the Yajurveda borrowed the verse from the Atharva-veda*)

(84)

The Ātman

अकामो धीरो अमृतः स्वयभू
रसेन तृप्तो न कुतश्चनोनः ।
तमेव विद्वान् न बिभाय मृत्योर्
आत्मान धीरम् अजर युवानम् ॥ अ. १०।८।४४

"Desireless, firm, immortal, Self existent,
contented with the essence, lacking nothing, is He
One fears not death who has known Him,
the Soul (Ātman)— serene, ageless, youthful."

Here we find the conception of the Divine as the Supreme Spirit (Ātman), ever steady, ever young, undecaying. This conception is very common in Upanishads.

As *Divine attributes* are also ideal human attributes, the highest efforts of sages have been directed in approximating this ideal

The conception of the Yogi is similar upto a point to the conception of the Divinity here The Yogi is desireless

(अकाम)and hence free from the impact of animal nature, he is serene with the heroism of the spirit (धीर); he is satisfied with the essence of things (रस), perceived spiritually, and hence does not depend on sense-perception for happiness; and so he becomes complete within himself. And though the physical body is subject to decay, he remains unworn (अजर) and ever youthful (युवा) in spirit and has no fear of death. This transcendence of animal nature and of old age and death makes a high type of man: he may be called the spiritual superman.

[The *Bhagavad Gita*, rightly described as a *Yoga-shastra*, "a treatise on yoga," fully expounds the conception of the yogi or the spiritual superman. It speaks of the स्थितप्रज्ञ, स्थितधी — the man in whom प्रज्ञा and धी — the highest powers of the mind—have been securely established.]

रस (rasa) is a most significant word in Sanskrit. It is the spiritual essence of things: the spiritual flavour, as it were. A Sanskrit rhetorician has described poetry as " वाक्य रसात्मकम् " " language with flavour in it." In this sense we may speak of the Divine as a Poet, enjoying the sweet flavour of reality: hence, He is not only सद् — Existence, not only चिद् - Intelligence, but also आनन्द — Joy. The association of *rasa* (रस) with the Divine lies at the basis of the Bhakti (भक्ति) cult.

Compare the Taittiriya Upanishad:

रसो वै सः । रसं ह्येवायं लब्ध्वाऽऽनन्दी भवति ।

तैत्तिरीय उपनिषत् । २।८

" He, verily, is *rasa* (the Essence, the Source of flavour). *By attaining Him, the rasa — the* Essence — one is filled with joy."

[The conception of the ideal person as अकाम, "desireless" has *formed* the essential *element* of Buddhistic ethics and metaphysics. According to these, it is काम, "desire", that involves us in the pursuit of pleasure and all the evils of life one who has renounced desire keeps clear of all those evil consequences. The supreme state of being, *in which desire has been extinguished*, has been called Nirvana (निर्वाण)].

(85)
The Universal Soul

चित्रं देवानाम् उदगाद् अनीकं
चक्षुर् मित्रस्य वरुणस्याग्नेः ।
आप्रा द्यावापृथिवी अन्तरिक्षं
सूर्य आत्मा जगतस् तस्थुषश्च ॥ ऋ १।११५।१
(य., अ.)

"The marvellous Presence of the Gods has risen,
the Eye of Mitra, Varuna and Agni:
The Soul of all that moves or stands still,—
Surya, prevading the heaven, the earth, the mid region."

Here Surya is spoken of as the अनीक *(face, presence)* of all Gods, i. e the *Symbol* for the Divinity. Similarly, He is the *eye* — the seeing faculty, the inner intellectual principle — of the Divinity, contemplated as Mitra, Varuna and Agni This is just another form of saying—

इन्द्र मित्र वरुणम् अग्निम् आहुर्...
एकं सद् विप्रा बहुधा वदन्ति ॥ ऋ १।१६४।४६

"They have spoken of Him as Agni, Mitra, Varuna, Indra: *the one Existence the sages speak of in many* ways".

[Perhaps here one should say, एकं चिद् — there is 'One Intellectual Power' — the *eye* of Gods] Finally, the idea is more fully stressed by the use of the word आत्मन् for Surya " *He is the Soul* in all beings, moving and non moving." This Soul idea is the dominant conception of the Divine in the Upanishads

As in the *gayatri* verse, so here, the Sun is not the Sun only of the material world (पृथिवी) but of the other two worlds also. द्यौ and अन्तरिक्ष — the infinite sky and the mid region.

(86)

The Quest of the Divine

Mysticism, being an experience, does not consist only in revelation — the complete mastery of ultimate knowledge, it also signifies a quest of the unknown. It asks

questions and the answers come as new visions unfold themselves.

अचिकित्वान् चिकितुषश् चिद् अत्र
कवीन् पृच्छामि विद्मने न विद्वान् ।
वि यस् तस्तम्भ षळिमा रजास्य-
जस्य रूपे किमपि स्विद् एकम् ॥ ऋ १।१६४।६

"Unknowing I ask of those who know—the sages—as one ignorant for the sake of knowledge:

What was that ONE in the form of the Unborn, that has fixed firm these world's six regions?"

(87)

Whom Shall We Worship?

In the hymn, of which the following is the first stanza, the refrain, occurring eight times, is a query regarding the Ultimate Reality.

हिरण्यगर्भः समवर्तताग्रे
भूतस्य जातः पतिर् एक आसीत् ।
स दाधार पृथिवीं द्याम् उतेमां
कस्मै देवाय हविषा विधेम ॥ ऋ १०।१२१।१

[*What God shall we adore with our oblation?*]
" The Divinity [that] existed in the beginning,
Who was One Lord of all created beings,
Who fixed and holds this earth and sky:
What God shall we adore with our oblation? "

(88)

The Final Mystery

In the following the Veda leaves the final question on ultimate things unanswered

को अद्धा वेद क इह प्र वोचत्
कुत आजाता कुत इयं विसृष्टिः ।
अर्वाग् देवा अस्य विसर्जनेना-
ऽथा को वेद यत आबभूव ॥ ऋ. १०।१२९।६

"Who verily knows, and who can here declare it—
Whence was it born and whence came this creation?
And did the Shining Ones appear with its production?
But then who knows whence it has arisen?"

(89)

Who Knows?

इयं विसृष्टिर् यत आबभूव
यदि वा दधे यदि वा न ।
यो अस्याध्यक्षः परमे व्योमन्
सो अङ्ग वेद यदि वा न वेद ॥

ऋ. १०।१२९।७

"He, from whom this creation came into being,
whether He upheld it or He did not,
He who oversees it in the eternal region,
He verily knows it or perhaps He does not know."

The Veda *recognises the* Supreme *Being oversee*ing all (अध्यक्ष परमे व्योमन्), but leaves unanswerd the question of whence—from what material—this creation came into being.

In the Purusha hymn the Veda gives a symbolical answer through the analogy of sacrifice: that a yajña was performed with the Primal Being, in which spring was the butter, *summer the fuel* and autumn the libation. Here, to a logical query, to which a literal answer is required, no reply is given. This shows that such a question is better left open.

This *attitude, typical of higher thought,* leads to a very delicately poised sense of truth which precludes every type of dogmatism. In this sense the Vedic attitude here is philosophical rather than religious, in the elementary sense of the latter term, according *to which a fixed and literal explanation is given in* respect of every aspect of the unseen reality

[Lord Buddha was maintaining this Vedic attitude when he kept silent about the Ultimate Reality He neither accepted *nor rejected the theory of the Ultimate* Being. The story in the *Kevatta Sutta* of *Digha Nikaya*, said to be told by Lord Buddha, is a fictional rendering of the Vedic hymn on Creation (नासदासीत् सूक्त) and of the verses that have been quoted above from it.

The story says that a certain Bhikshu in a state of samādhi wished to know where earth, water, fire and air

were finally dissolved. With the help of his spiritual powers he visited four *Devatās.* They were unable to answer the question and asked him to go to Indra. Indra directed him to some higher Divinity. The Bhikshu moved to higher heavens till he found himself in *Brahma loka* There he put his question to Brahmā who found that he did not know the answer to this question But he did not wish to expose his ignorance. He described his divine glories, but the Bhikshu said he came to know not what, Brahmā was like, but what was the final state into which the four elements were dissolved Then Brahmā took him aside and said, "All the Devatās living in my heaven believe me to be omniscient, I will not confess my ignorance before them But really I don't know where the four elements finally lose themselves."

Brahmā's "I don't know" in the Buddistic story is obviously a folk tale rendering of—

यो अस्याध्यक्षः परमे व्योमन्
सो अङ्ग वेद यदि वा न वेद ॥

'He who oversees it in the eternal region,
He verily knows it or perhaps He does not know.'

The story proceeds further. Brahmā asks the Bhikshu to go back to Buddha and ask him the question. He comes to Buddha and puts his question—"Where do the four elements finally lose themselves?" Buddha

says the question is wrongly put. It should be—"Where do the four elements lose their identity; where do length and shortness, the gross and the fine, the real and the unreal, name and form, cease to exist?" and the reply to the question is—

"In the consciousness beyond the power of vision, and in the eternally bright lustre, the four elements lose their identity."

Here the state beyond the real and the unreal refers to the same as described in the Veda:

नासद् आसीन्नोसद् आसीत् तदानीम्

"Then there was neither unreality nor reality."

The metaphysical idea presented in the above Vedic verse has also been rendered into a curious popular story in Skandha Purana. But though crude the legend has a significance. It is that the ultimate truth cannot be stated as a simple fact: it is shrouded in mystery the same idea as given in the Rigvedic verse quoted above. The story is this Brahmā and Vishnu both tried to trace the two ends of a vast *linga* (i.e. origin) which they found spreading before them. Vishnu assumed the form of a tortoise and went down, whilst Brahmā embodied himself as a swan and flew upwards. Both travelled for one thousand years (of the gods) at the speed of the human mind and yet they could not fathom it. Vishnu came back and confessed

"*For the finite the eloquent man, for the infinite the mute.*"

But the demand for expression is most urgent in man; and the mystic sage finds that he must express what from the nature of the experience is ineffable. *Failing to interpret in terms of the intellect* he seeks the language of the spirit. First, he accepts poetry, with the subtle power of rhythm, as the medium of expression. Secondly he extends the expressive power of words by investing them with symbolism. In a symbol far more is meant that meets the ear.

The following refers to mystical language.—

चत्वारि वाक् परिमिता पदानि
तानि विदुर् ब्राह्मणा ये मनीषिणः ।
गुहा त्रीणि निहिता नेङ्गयन्ति
तुरीयं वाचो मनुष्या वदन्ति ॥ ऋ १।१६४।४५

"Speech of four types has been measured;
the sages who are wise know them.
Three that are hidden in the cave (i.e. are mystic)
make no motion;
men speak the fourth (type of) *speech*."

The three types of speech that make no motion are the silent speech—or the silence that is more eloquent than language—in respect of the infinite.

The silence, however, is partially broken with the

help of poetry and symbol sm A little sound conveys, so to speak, the import of a great silence behind it

(92)

The Great Secret

The expression गुहाहित or गुहानिहित — the deep mystery--has been *frequently* used in the Vedas The following verse says that in the Ultimate Mystery that is the Divine, the whole universe finds its rallying point

वनस्तत् पश्यन् निहित गुहा सद्
यत्र विश्व भवत्यकनीडम्। यजु. ३२।८

" *The loving sage sees That Being* which is mysterious

That in which the universe becomes as one nest

[Universal fellowship, which was preached by the Vedas in ancient times has been set again and again as a human ideal in different ages by poets, saints and mystics]

(93)

Realisation of the Mystic Knowledge

The spiritual experience of *the* sages—the revelation of the Ultimate Reality—*could not be interpreted* and *transmitted in terms* of the intellect It had to be realised through the spirit The spiritual knowledge was communicated from sage to sage through the kindling of the spirit It needed a disciplined life to fit one for the higher knowledge

निधीयमानम् अपगूळ्हम् अप्सु
प्र मे देवाना व्रतपा उवाच ।
इन्द्रो विद्वाँ अनु हि त्वा चचक्ष
तेनाहम् अग्न अनुशिष्ट आगाम् । ऋ. १०।३२।६

"Of Thee who art lying hidden in the waters,
One who maintains the law of Gods spoke to me.
Indra, who knows, beheld and showed Thee.
By him instructed, O Agni, I come."

Here the sage says he has realised the mystic secret through instruction received from Indra. In the following verse he explains the value of spiritual instruction [Indra seems to be the name of the Acharya].

(The last three lines of this stanza occur also in Rig III 2 8.)

(94)

The Guide in the Unknown Land

अक्षेत्रवित् क्षेत्रविदं ह्यप्राट्
स प्रैति क्षेत्रविदानुशिष्टः ।
एतद् वै भद्रम् अनुशासनस्यो-
त स्रुतिं विन्दत्यञ्जसीनाम् ॥ ऋ. १०।३२।७

"One ignorant of the land asks of one who knows it;
he travels forward instructed by the knowing guide.
This, indeed, is the blessing of instruction:
one finds the path that leads directly forward."

This means that the Acharya or teacher is a spiritual guide of the disciple He helps the inexperienced person to find for himself what has to be known The Acharya shows the way

This establishes a fine principle of education, whether spiritual or intellectual The rôle of the teacher is that of a guide The pupil learns by himself

Applied to religion it means that every one has to find for oneself what the secret truths regarding the Ultimate Reality are In doing so he needs guidance, but the discovery must be his own

[This presents a contrast to the later theory regarding the Guru who was supposed to be alone capable of spiritual discovery, and from whom the disciple was to receive it second hand All that the disciple had to do was to place trust in the Guru not to outgrow the need of his help He did not go forward he perpetually followed the Guru This view of the Guru or the teacher is anti Vedic]

We can describe the course of spiritual life by the word — प्रैति — one goes forward

(95)

Universality of Spiritual Knowledge

Though the realisation of the ultimate knowledge is through the kindling of the spirit and requires the

Acharya, spiritual preceptor, as the guide, yet the knowledge, when realised, is for the world as a whole. Hence Vedic truths are not secrets to be carefully kept from the public The sage who realises them feels called upon to declare them to his fellowmen, irrespective of their social or cultural status. This feature of the Vedic religion distinguishes it from occult sects. In the following verse the sage says that he will give the holy words of wisdom *to the whole society*

> यथेमां वाचं कल्याणीम् आवदानि जनेभ्यः ।
> ब्रह्मराजन्याभ्यां शूद्राय चार्याय च स्वाय चारणाय च ॥
>
> यजु २६।२

> "So may I speak these blessed words to the people at large:
> to the Brahmana and the Kshatriya, to the Vaiśya and the Śūdra, to my own people and to the foreigner."

[The so called Brahmins of a later age who thought that the Vedas should not be taught to any one who was not a member of the Brahmin caste were going against the Veda itself]

विभूति-योग

THE PATH OF SPLENDOUR

THE PATH OF SPLENDOUR

The Path of Mysticism (राजयोग) follows a super-sensuous preception , the Path of Splendour (विभूतियोग) the sense perceptions themselves Here the sage per ceives the Divine presence in all that is splendid and beautiful in the universe The path of Mysticism is the path of the sage (ऋषि) as a recluse (मुनि, योगी), the path of Splendour is the path of the sage as a poet (कवि). Spiritual consciousness on this plane is essen tially poetic consciousness *The poet sage expresses* his exquisite astonishment before the visions of glory and wonder With him worship is ecstatic wonder As a result, *the words of worship are as* much poetry as part of religion In fact the world has *not known sublimer or more beautiful religious poetry* than found in the Vedas

The poetic-spiritual attitude that we have descri *bed (after the Bhagvad Gita)* as the Path of Splendour (विभूतियोग) has this speciality—*that it never loses* touch with the material reality which is realised by sense-perception, *though it seeks a transcendental,* beyond the senses Though sometimes the prayer be-*comes* purely abstract and conveys metaphysical and moral ideas, still, *in its more typical form, the abstract* idea is conveyed by an image of beauty and glory. *This image carries* with it the highest poetic value

(96)

The Light Divine

The source of all splendour is light Hence light is the central object of *admiration* for the poet-sage Light (ज्योतिः) also is the symbol for all splendour and glory of the spirit It stands for truth (सत्य), order (ऋत), reality (सद्), goodness (स्वस्ति), beauty (श्री, चारुता), intelligence (धी), wisdom (क्रतु), bliss (भद्र), immortality (अमृत),—for God (देव) and the noble man (आर्य), whereas the opposite of light—darkness (तमस्)—stands for untruth (असत्य), disorder (अनृत), unreality (असत्), evil (अशिव, दुरित), ugliness (अश्री), ignorance (अविद्या), death (मृत्यु) —and for the Demon (वृत्र) and the wicked man (दस्यु, दास) Light is associated with fire (अग्नि), the sun (सूर्य), the moon (सोम), the dawn (उषा) etc

The symbolic acceptance of Agni led to the identification of the name with the inner Principle of light whether associated with fire or lightening or the sun Agni is thus contemplated as the Effulgent One, sending His light to earth, to the sky and to water, and supplying the life energy to plants Surya is the source of life. Thus he becomes the Inner Principle of light and life—सूर्य आत्मा जगतस्तस्थुषश्च—"Surya, the *Atman within what moves and* what stands still" Extremely poetic are the visions of the breaking of

Dawn (उषा) and the glory of light spreading over the world

The negative and positive aspects of the Vedic religion may respectively be found in the conception of Indra the killer of the power of darkness (वृत्रहा) and the bringer of light (स्वर्विद्).

The following verse suggests the transcendental light through the earthly

उद् वयं तमसस्परि ज्योतिष्पश्यन्त उत्तरम् ।
देवं देवत्रा सूर्यम् अगन्म ज्योतिरुत्तमम् ॥ ऋ १।५०।१०
(सा., य., अ.)

'Looking at the transcendent light beyond the darkness, we
have come to Surya God among gods, the Light that is most excellent'

ज्योति ordinarily means light, but उत्तरम्, transcendent, takes the idea to a higher plane Surya, though connected with the object of physical perception, implies more than a physical object its light most excellent symbolises the spiritual glory

(97)

The Lord of Light

शीर्ष्णः शीर्ष्णो जगतस् तस्थुषस् पतिं समया विश्वम् आ रजः ।
सप्त स्वसारः सुविताय सूर्यं वहन्ति हरितो रथे ॥ १५ ॥
तच्चक्षुर् देवहितं शुक्रम् उच्चरत् ।
पश्येम शरदः शतं जीवेम शरदः शतम् ॥ १६ ॥ ऋ. ७।६६

"Him who shines crest by crest equally on all,
Surya, the Lord of what moves and what is still,
The seven Sister Bays bear in the car, for (the world's) well-being.
"That lustrous Eye, God-ordained, arising,
May we see a hundred autumns. May we live a hundred autumns."

The union of light and life sums up, in the physical the spiritual sense, the Vedic outlook on life and religion.

(98)

Destroyer of Darkness and Evil

आ विबाध्या परिरापस् तमांसि च
ज्योतिष्मन्तं रथम् ऋतस्य तिष्ठसि ।
बृहस्पते भीमम् अमित्रदम्भनं
रक्षोहणं गोत्रभिदं स्वर्विदम् ॥ ऋ २।२३।३

"Having chased away the wicked ones and darkness,
Thou mountest Thy refulgent car of Order,
The awful car, O Lord of wisdom! that subdues the foe, slays the wicked, cleaves the stall of light and brings the light."

Here light (ज्योतिः) and Eternal Law-Goodness- (ऋत) are identified and hence darkness (तमस्) implies the power of evil—the enemy (अमित्र), the wicked one (रक्ष).

In *Rigveda* X 103 6 the expression गोत्रभिदम्—'cleaver of the stall of kine' is followed by गोविदम्—'bringer of kine'. Here स्वर्विदम्—'bringer of light'—occurs for गोविदम्—'bringer of kine.' Evidently गो and स्वर् are synonymous terms meaning 'light'. So गोत्रभिदम् really means "cleaver of the stall of light."

The word भीम (awful) indicates the sternness of Divine Law (ऋत). It corresponds to the moral idea of light—viz. goodness.

(The Deity is Brahmanaspati, Lord of Prayer).

(99)

The Life-Giver

बृहत्सुम्नः प्रसवीता निवेशनो
जगतः स्थातुरुभयस्य यो वशी ।
स नो देवः सविता शर्म यच्छ-
त्वस्मे क्षयाय त्रिवरूथम् अंहसः ॥ ऋ. ४।५३।६

"Most gracious God, who brings (the world) to life and keeps (it) in repose;
He who controls what moves and what is still,
May He, Savita the God, grant us grace,
for serene life and three fold bar against evil."

Here सविता—Savita—has been described as प्रसवीता—the producer of life. Compare—स च सुवाति सविता. (८.८२.९) 'He who generates life is Savita.'

The prayer is of a general type, seeking protection against evil.

(100)

Glorious and Beloved Supremacy

अस्य हि स्वयशस्तर सावतु कचन प्रियम् ।
न मिनन्ति स्वराज्यम् ॥ ऋ ५।८२।२

"This Savita s own supremacy, most glorious and beloved,
None can diminish

Here the effulgence of Savita is not only glorious, but also beloved The word *Swarajya* (स्वराज्य), one's own supremacy or sovereignty, has often been used in the Vedas

(101)

Source of Goodness

विश्वानि देव सवितर् दुरितानि परा सुव ।
यद् भद्र तन्न आ सुव ॥ ऋ ५।८२।५

' Savita! God! send far away all evil
Send us what is good '

Here the idea of physical glory is converted into that of moral power

[We found a word play between Savita (सविता) and प्रसवाता (inspirer of life), here there is a word-play on Savita (सविता) and the verb सुव (move) in परा सुव, 'move away', and आ सुव 'move in', 'bring', derived from the same root (सु, सू) as the word Savita (सविता).]

(102)

Source of Beauty

अनागसो अदितये देवस्य सवितुः सवे ।
विश्वा वामानि धीमहि ॥ ऋ ५।८२।६

"Sinless, for noble power under the influence of
Savita, God,
May we obtain all things that are beautiful."

Here the power of goodness is contemplated to lead to the power of beauty

अदिति, the Primal Divine Power, is taken in the abstract here as in the following description of Agni

विश्वाम् अदितिर् यज्ञियानाम् । ऋ. ४।१।२०

'The divine power among all adorable Ones'

[Here also there seems to be a word play on Savita (सविता) and Sava (सव), influence]

(103)

Source of Truth

आ विश्वदेवं सत्पतिं सूक्तैरद्या वृणीमहे ।
सत्यसवं सवितारम् ॥ ऋ ५।८२।७

'We with our hymns elect to day the all God,
Lord of the good,
Savita, whose decrees are true.'

The expression 'we elect' (वृणीमहे) implies the willing acceptance of the Divine Power—the Power of goodness and truth. For the word, compare—

विशो न राजानं वृणाना: (ऋ १०।१२४।८)

" As the people elect the King."

[Here also there is the word play on सव and सविता.]

विश्वदेव—all-God—is an interesting Vedic expression. As the Veda ignores the difference of number, it addresses "all Gods"—विश्वे देवाः in the same way as it addresses one God as "All God" (विश्वदेव). This *implies that though the Veda speaks of many Gods it* does not recognise the real numerical significance of 'many'. The many—i. e. the multiple conceptions of God—are contained in the One. God is One—but is contemplated in many ways. This is mystical conception peculiar to the Veda.

The three verses quoted above which belong to the same hymn and appear in succession indicate the three principal values or ultimates — Goodness (भद्रम्), Beauty (वामम्) and Truth (सत्यम्). It was *many centuries after the Vedas that these values were* formulated by the philosophers of Greece. It is notable that the Vedas anticipate them in their characteristic form.

[There are other words too for these three values; e. g. शिव, स्वस्ति for Goodness, श्री, चारुता for Beauty, ऋत for Truth. The word सुदरम् for beauty appears to be a modern one]

(104)

The Overseer

यो विश्वाभि वि पश्यति
भुवना स च पश्यति ।
स नः पूषाविता भुवत् ॥ ऋ. ३।६२।९

" He who sees all from above and aside,
sees all living things together,
May He, Pushan, be our Saviour

Here there is on the one hand the idea of the all seeing sun, and on the other of the omniscient Divinity

(105)

Inspirer of the Soul

तम् ईशान जगतस्तस्थुषस् पति
धियजिन्वम् अवसे हूमहे वयम् ।
पूषा नो यथा वेदसामसद् वृधे
रक्षिता पायुरदब्ध स्वस्तये ॥ ऋ. १।८९।५

" Him, the Lord of what moves and what stands still,
The *inspirer of the soul, we invoke for our aid.*
May the Deity, our Protector and our Guard
Who is *unassailable, promote the increase of our* wealth— for our well being.'

Here the Deity is Pushan

The *qualifying adjectives* are, some of them, the same as applied to Savita स्वस्ति (literally 'what is good - सु) means spiritual well being

(106)

The Noble Lady.

आ घा योषेव सुनर्युषा याति प्रभुञ्जती ।
जरयन्ती वृजनं पद्वदीयत उत्पातयति पक्षिणः ॥ ऋ. १।४८।५

"Like a noble lady Ushas comes tending everything carefully,
Rousing all life she stirs every footed creature and makes the birds fly."

Hote the word, सुनरी, a noble or good lady, apples to Ushas. योषा is a young unmarried lady.

(107)

The Loving Maiden

जानत्यह्नः प्रथमस्य नाम
शुक्रा कृष्णाद् अजनिष्ट श्वितीची ।
ऋतस्य योषा न मिनाति धामाऽ–
हर् अहर् निष्कृतम् आचरन्ती ॥ ऋ. १।१२३।९

"She who has knowledge of the first of days, is born refulgent white out of darkness;
The Maiden breaks not the law of Order by coming day by day to the appointed place" (*to meet her lover*)

For निष्कृतम्, compare—

निष्कृत जारिणीव । ऋ. १०।३४।६

"As the loving girl comes to the appointed place" (to meet her lover).

(108)

The Glorly of Beauty

न्येव तन्वा ३ शाशदानाँ
पि देवि देवम् इयक्षमाणम्।
स्मयमाना युवतिः पुरस्ताद्
आविर् वक्षासि कृणुषे विभाती ॥ ऋ. १।१२३।१०

'Like a maiden, in pride of beauty,
Thou goest, Goddess, to meet the God who longs to win Thee;
And smiling, youthful, and brightly shining,
Thou discoverest Thy bosom before him.'

(109)

The Blessed Virgin

सुसंकाशा मातृमृष्टेव योषा—
विस् तन्वं कृणुषे दृशे कम्।
भद्रा त्वम् उषो वितरं व्युच्छ
न तत् ते अन्या उषसो नशन्त ॥ ऋ १।१२३।११

"Lovely as a bride adorned by her mother,
Thou showest forth Thy form that all may see it,
Blessed art Thou, Dawn! Shine more widely
No other Dawns have attained what thou attainest"

The expression, मातृमृष्टेव योषा, 'like a bride adorned *by her mother*'—is most graceful

(110)

The Blissful Goddess

In the following verse the sense of the glory of light turns to a sense of grace and goodness.

ऋतस्य रश्मिम् अनुयच्छमाना

भद्रं भद्रं क्रतुम् अस्मासु धेहि ।

उषो नो अद्य सुहवा व्युच्छा-

स्मासु रायो मघवत्सु च स्युः ॥ ऋ १।१२३।१३

"Obedient to the reins of Eternal Order,
Give us each thought that is more and more blissful
Shine on us, Dawn! easy to be invoked
May we and the men in power have Thy bounty."

(111)

Welcome of Songs

The vision of Dawn creates new types of beautiful poetic imagery, each combining in it ideas of light, loveliness and divine purity

द्युतद्यामानं बृहतीम् ऋतेन

ऋतावरीम् अरुणप्सुं विभातीम् ।

देवीम् उषसं स्वर् आवहन्तीं

प्रति विप्रासो मतिभिर् जरन्ते ॥ ऋ ५।८०।१

"Bright on her path, sublime, by Law true to Eternal Order, red-tinted, far-shining.
Ushas, Goddess, bringer of light
—Her the poets welcome with the singing of their hymns"

(112)

Beauty Bright with Bathing

एषा शुभ्रा न तन्वो विदानो-
र्ध्वेव स्नाती दृशये नो अस्थात् ।
अप द्वेषो बाधमाना तमांस्यु-
षा दिवो दुहिता ज्योतिषागात् ॥ ऋ. ५।८०।५

"She, as if conscious that her limbs are bright with bathing, stands, as it were, erect, so that we may see her,

Having driven away malignity and darkness, Ushas, Daughter of the sky, has come with light "

The first two lines are statuesque The erect figure of the Goddess of perfect beauty, bright with bathing, stands before our mental vision.

Malignity and darkness are bracketed together and opposed by light Thus moral ideas are symbolised by the physical

The verse also clearly implies that what is beautiful is good, and opposed to evil. This is a fundamental point in Vedic ideology. It combines poetry and religion

(113)

The Modest Maiden

एषा प्रतीची दुहिता दिवो नॄन्
योषेव भद्रा नि रिणीते अप्सः।
व्यूर्ण्वती दाशुषे वार्याणि
पुनर् ज्योतिर् युवतिः पूर्वथाकः ॥ ऋ. ५।८०।६

"She, Daughter of the sky, like a virtuous virgin,
bends, opposite to men, her forehead downwards.
Disclosing boons to the worshipper, the Maiden
has brought again the *light* as *before*."

Extremely graceful is the description of the gentle downward movement of her head by a virtuous virgin, when she is face to face with men. The verse refers to the ideal of *feminine modesty*

(114)

Like a Dancer

अधि पेशांसि वपते नृतूरिवा-
पोर्णुते वक्ष उस्रेव बर्जहम् ।
ज्योतिर् विश्वस्मै भुवनाय कृण्वती
गावो न व्रजं व्यु१ षा आवर् तमः ॥ ऋ १।९२।४

"She, like a dancer, enrobes herself with her
embroidered garments;
She bares her bosom as the cow yields her udder.
Creating light for all the world of life,
Ushas has laid open the darkness as cows their
stalls."

(115)

The Goddess advancing amid Ten Arms

इय या नीच्यर्किणी रूपा रोहिण्या कृता।
चित्रेव प्रत्यदर्शायत्य १ न्तर् दशसु बाहुषु ॥
ऋ. ८।१०१।१३

"She yonder, bending down, rich in rays, clothed in red hues;
Is seen, advancing as one wonderful, amid the ten surrounding arms"

We are reminded by this verse of the ten armed (दशभुजा) *Goddess worshipped in modern Bengal.* The origin of the Puranik conception of Durga evidently lies in the Veda. In the Veda the 'ten arms' have the original abstract significauce of 'ten directions.'

(116)

Dawn in Days to come

ईयुष्टे ये पूर्वतराम् अपश्यन्
व्युच्छन्तीम् उषस मर्त्यासः।
अस्माभिरू नु प्रतिचक्ष्याभूदो
ते यन्ति ये अपरीषु पश्यान् ॥ ऋ १।११३।११

"Gone are those mortals who beheld the beaming Dawn in former ages,
We, now behold her brightness,
and they are coming who will see her in times to come."

Here the response to the glory of Dawn unites the past, present and future generations of men.

(117)

The All-pervading Being

हंसः शुचिषद् वसुरन्तरिक्षसद्
होता वेदिषद् अतिथिर् दुरोणसत् ।
नृषद् वरसद् ऋतसद् व्योमसद्
अब्जा गोजा ऋतजा अद्रिजा ऋतम् ॥ ऋ. ४।४०।५
य. वा. १०।२४, १२।१४

"He is the Swan seated in the midst of light; *the* Lord of wealth seated in the mid-region:

the Priest seated by the altar, the Guest seated at the house;

The Dweller among men, the Dweller in the noblest place, the Dweller in Truth, the Dweller in the infinite sky,

born of waters, born of light, born of truth, born of the mountain, He is the Eternal Law."

The Deity in this verse is Dadhikrâvan (दधिक्रावन्) or Surya (सूर्य).

The beginning of the verse may suggest a material phenomenon, the sun surrounded by bright light. But soon it becomes apparent that the swan (हंस) is a symbolic term, signifying the Ultimate Being; and the idea expressed is that of the all pervasiveness of the Divinity. He is in the light of the heavens and of the mid region; He is at the altar on the earth, He is the honoured Guest in the homes of men. He is in men, in

the best of places, in the infinite sky: He is within water, within the mountain. Finally the idea goes from the concrete to the abstract: He is in truth: He is the Truth—the Eternal Order.

This association of the concrete and the abstract, the material and the spiritual, is typical of Vedic poetry and belongs to the religious out look described as विभूति-योग, the path of Splendour.

[It will be found here how wrong it is of those who say that the Vedas worship natural objects like the sun. When the sun is described as "truth-born" and "the truth," no doubt is left as to the meaning that is finally attached to the conception of the Deity. Here neither 'the sun' nor, for that matter, 'the swan, (हंस), is to be taken literally. The ideas are symbolical, and signify the Ultimate Reality]

The verse is quoted in *Katha Upanishad* (V. 1) to describe the supreme qualities of Atman

(118)

The People's Light

अग्ने केतुर् विशाम् असि
प्रेष्ठः श्रेष्ठ उपस्थसत् ।
बोधा स्तोत्रे वयो दधत् ॥ ऋ १०।१५६।५

"Thou, God, art the people's light;
dearest, best, seated near;
Enlighten the singer, give him life."

Here the Deity is Agni. The superlatives—'dearest' and 'best'—are very significant.

(119)

The Wonderful One

स चित्र चित्र चितयन्तम् अस्मे
चित्रक्षत्र चित्रतम वयोधाम् ।
चन्द्र रयिं पुरुवीर बृहन्त
चन्द्र चन्द्राभिर् गृणते युवस्व ॥ ऋ. ६।६।७

" O wondrous One! of wondrous power!
O Lord of wonders! give us what is most wonderful, life giving,
O Bright One! with Thy brightness, give to Thy singer great wealth, brilliant, with many heroes "

[The Deity is Agni] Here Divine effulgence and its wonder are contemplated with a poetic thrill

(120)

The Supreme Light

ध्रुव ज्योतिर्निहित दृशये क
मनो जविष्ठ पतयत्स्वन्त. ।
विश्वे देवाः समनस. सकेता
एक क्रतुम् अभि वि यन्ति साधु ॥ ऋ ६।९।५

" A steady Light, swifter than thought, is stationed among moving things to show the way,
All the shining Ones, being of one mind and like wisdom, proceed reverently towards the One Intelligence."

Here the Divine Presence is understood in terms of light and intelligence [The Deity is *Vaishwanara Agni*]. Powers, cosmic and mental, move towards it. It is steady (ध्रुव) in the midst of moving things (पततम्).

क्रतु implies the second of the three aspects of the Divinity, सच्चिदानन्द; *it is synonymous* with चित्.

(121)

He lights up Darkness

अयं रोचयद् अरुचो रुचानो ३
ऽयं वासयद् व्यृ १ तेन पूर्वीः ।
अयम् ईयत ऋतयुग्भिर् अश्वैः
स्वर्विदा नाभिना चर्षणिप्राः ॥ ऋ ६।३९।४

"He, shining, caused to shine what shone not.
By Law he lighted up the dawns
He moves with steeds yoked by eternal order,
Making men happy by the chariot-nave that finds the sunlight"

[The Deity is Indra]

(122)

The Ageless

न य जरन्ति शरदो न मासा
न द्याव इन्द्रम् अवकर्शयन्ति ।
वृद्धस्य चिद् वर्धताम् अस्य तनूः
स्तोमेभिर् उक्थैश्च शस्यमाना ॥ ऋ ६।२४।७

"Years do not age him, nor months nor days wear out Indra;

May his self grow, though ever so mighty,
glorified by songs of praise and hymns of prayer."

The sense of the first part of the verse is the same as expressed by the words "अजर" (ageless) and "युवा" (youthful), but it is expressed in the particularised manner, characteristic of poetry. The worshipper thinks his songs of praise will increase the greatness of God —an idea typical of the attitude of *bhakti*.

(123)

The Bright One

यद् द्याव इन्द्र ते शत
शत भूमीर् उत स्युः ।
न त्वा वज्रिन्त्सहस्र सुर्या अनु
न जातमष्ट रोदसी ॥ ऋ. ८।७०।५,

साम. २७८, ८६२; अ. २०।८१।१, ९२।२०

"If Indra! a hundred heavens were Thine,
and even a hundred earths,—

No, not even a thousand suns, O Thunderer,
could match Thy Being
nor both the worlds"

Here the Divine glory is described. Compare the *Bhagavad Gita*

दिवि सूर्यसहस्रस्य भवद् युगपदुत्थिता ।
यदि भाः सदृशी सा स्याद् भासस्तस्य महात्मनः ॥ भ. गी. ११।१२

"If there could be the splendour of a thousand suns arisen at once in the sky,
Such would be the glory of that Magnificent Being".

(124)

The One Lord

समेत विश्वा वचसा पतिं दिव
एको विभुर् अतिथिर् जनानाम् ।
स पूर्व्यो नूतनम् आविवासत्
तं वर्तनिर् अनु वावृत एकम् इत् पुरु ॥ अ. ७।२१।१

'Come together, ye all, with words (of prayer) to the Lord of Heaven
Who is One, the Lord, the Guest of the people;
He, the Ancient, pervades the new,
To Him, the One Alone, the many paths are turned'

This verse also occurs in *Sama veda*. (See No. 3).

The Sama-veda speaks of वर्चस, 'spiritual vigour', which men should bring to their worship; the Atharvan of वचस्, 'words of prayer'.

(125)

His Mainfold Splendour

ब्रह्मा देवानां पदवीः कवीनाम्
ऋषिर्विप्राणां महिषो मृगाणाम्
श्येनो गृध्राणां स्वधितिर्वनानां
सोमः पवित्रम् अत्येति रेभन् ॥ ऋ ९।९६।६

"This obeisance is spoken for the Mighty One, the
self resplendent,
for Him whose power is truth, for the strong One,
In this battle, O God! may all the heroes,
with the princes, be under Thy protection."
[The Deity is Indra].

Here Indra is described as *Vrishava*, the Mighty One [In later religious literature the word was taken in the non metaphorical way, meaning the bull, and the bull came to occupy a place of worship. In the South *Vasava*, Prakrit for *Vrishava*, is the Bull God Compare with *Vrishava* (वृषभ), literally, bull the description of the Deity, as *Mesha* (मेष) in Rig I 5 15 which is used in the abstract sense to imply power, not in the concrete sense of 'a ram'.

Similarly in the following verse, the Deity has been called a 'varaha' (वराह) literally, 'wild boar.'

दिवा बराहम् अरुप कपर्दिन
त्वप रूप नमसा नि ह्वयामेह । ऋ. १।११४।५

'We invoke with our obeisance
the Mighty One of the sky, red, with conch like
hair, the dazzling shape'

Perhaps this is at the root of the conception of the Divine incarnation of *Varāha* (the boar). But the Veda uses the term in the abstract to mean the fury of Rudra suggested by a violent storm]

(128)

God's Many Aspects

मन्ये त्वा यज्ञियं यज्ञियाना
मन्ये त्वा च्यवनम् अच्युतानाम् ।
मन्ये त्वा सत्वनाम् इन्द्र केतु
मन्ये त्वा वृषभ चर्षणीनाम् ॥

ऋ. ८।९६।४

'I deem Thee as the Holiest of the holy,
I deem Thee as the Shaker of the unshaken;
I deem Thee, O God ! as the Banner of heroes,
I deem Thee as the Chief of the people.'

[The Deity is Indra]

Here the holiness, power, valour and supremacy of God are described in highly poetic language. The repeated, " I deem Thee " (मन्ये त्वा) creates a fine oratorical effect

(129)

The Model of the World

यस्मान्न ऋते विजयन्ते जनासो
य युध्यमाना अवसे हवन्ते ।
यो विश्वस्य प्रतिमान बभूव
यो अच्युतच्युत् स जनास इन्द्रः ॥

ऋ. २।१२।९

'He, without whom men never conquer,
Whom, while fighting in battle, they invoke for succour:
He, who is the Model of all this world,
Who is the Shaker of the unshaken, He, O men, is Indra.'

Here the central principle of Vibhuti-Yoga is stated

या विश्वस्य प्रतिमानं बभूव–

that the universe reflects divine splendour, it is a copy of God

Cf. Mundakopanishad:

तमेव भान्तमनुभाति सर्वं
तस्य भासा सर्वमिदं विभाति । मुंडक. १०।४२

'All shine after His shining,
By His splendour all the world is splendid.'

(130)

The Dancer

श्रिये ते पादा दुव आ मिमिक्षुर्
धृष्णुर् वज्री शवसा दक्षिणावान् ।
वसानो अत्कं सुरभिं दृशे कं
स्व१र्ण नृतविषिरो बभूथ ॥ ऋ. ६।२९।३

'For glory Thy devotees embrace Thy Feet.
Bold, thunder armed, gracious through Thy might,
Clad in a vesture, beautiful as heaven to look on,
Thou hast been as an active dancer.'

The word Shree (श्री) has carried a sense of divine glory and bliss through *thousands of years.*

Here God is called a Dancer. Dancing is the beauty of movement—the rhythm of life

In later times, the figure of dancing Shiva has been much admired. The different sects took the Vedic ideas, particularly those associated with Indra In the verse quoted above, we have the origin of the idea of the Divinity as Dancer Also compare :

य. पूर्व्याम् अनुष्टुतिम् ईशे कृष्टीना नृतुः ॥ ऋ. ८।६८।७

' Who was Lord of ancient praise-song, of tribes of men, the Dancer '

Also cf Rig II 22 4, VIII 92 3

In Rig I 92 4, Ushas has been described as नृतु — dancer, so have Asvins in Rig VI 63 5

(131)

Bringer of Lovely Water

प्रासुवा नभन्वो३न वक्वा
ध्वस्रा अपिन्वद् युवतीर् ऋतज्ञा. ।
धन्वान्यज्रा अपृणक् तृषाणॉ
अधोग् इन्द्र. स्तर्यो३ दंसुपत्नी: ॥ ऋ. ४।१९।७

' Indra let the young virgins skilled in Law,
as fountains, bubbling, flow streaming forward
He flooded with water the deserts and thirsty plains,
and milked the dry cows who had a mighty master.'

The divine action described here refers to the glory of the breaking of rains after summer 'The young virgins', referring to streamlets, is a graceful metaphor Here we find the initial stage of the poetic analogy which in later times developed into the mythology of water-nymphs through a detailed allegory The law (ऋत) is the Law of Universal Order, here the law of nature 'Milking the cows implies the streaming of water from clouds The mighty master is *Vritra*, *the* enemy of light, of goodness, of order, who prevented the working of the Law and the breaking of rains

(132)

The Source of Beauty

य पुष्पिणीश्च प्रस्वश्च धर्मणा
अधि दाने व्यवनीरधारय ।
यश्चासमा अजनो दिद्युतो दिव
उरुरूर्वाँ अभित सास्युक्थ्य ॥ ऋ २।१३।७

'Thou who by Eternal Law hast spread about flowering and seed bearing plants, and streams of water,

Thou who hast generated the matchless lightenings in the sky,—

Thou, vast, encompassing vast realms, art a fit subject for our song

The word धर्मन् is cognate with "dharma" (धर्म) which has been widely used in Indian religious literature. It is Eternal Law. It is an attribute of God that He maintains Eternal Law. He does not exercise a whimsical or arbitrary will.

The Eternal Law (धर्म) manifests itself in nature, making its beauty and glory. In its application to life, धर्म or Eternal law makes virtuous conduct—goodness. Hence the beautiful and the good are but two aspects of धर्म—Law, cosmic and moral. Cosmic lawlessness is chaos, and moral lawlessness evil.

[*The Deity is Indra.*]

(133)

The Revelation

प्र सु स्तोमं भरत वाजयन्त
इन्द्राय सत्यं यदि सत्यमस्ति ।
नेन्द्रो अस्तीति नेम उ त्व आह
क ईं ददर्श कम् अभि ष्टवाम ॥३॥
अयम् अस्मि जरितः पश्य मेह
विश्वा जातान्यभ्यस्मि मह्ना ।
ऋतस्य मा प्रदिशो वर्धयन्त्या-
दर्दिरो भुवना दर्दरीमि ॥४॥ ऋ. ८।१००

' Desiring strength, bring forward a hymn of praise,
a truthful hymn to Indra, if, truly, He exists,
" There is no Indra," one and another said,
" who has seen Him? Whom, then, shall we adore?"

"I exist, O singer! look upon Me here;
all that exists I surpasss in splendour.
The Eternal Law's commandments make me mighty;
when I rend, I rend asunder the worlds"

The Divinity manifests Itself through splendour and through Law. This revelation is different from the revelations described in later religions, according to which some physical body appears before a man Here the singer does not see a person or perceive a physical object, he realises within him that he can see God *where he stands—through His splendour,* as manifested in the universe, and through His Law which works in nature and life

The sage's realisation implies that 'God is here or nowhere'

'Rending' implies the might of Divine Law.

Mark the spirit of scepticism preceding the mastery of truth. It is only in very highly refined society that the spirit of doubt and query plays an important part in life. There people are not led by blind faith.

'If truly, Indra exists'—indicates a robust mind *refusing to accept an idea without personal realisation.*

'Who has seen Him?' (क ईं ददर्श) implies that nobody has seen Him with eyes 'Look upon me here (पश्य मेह) indicates that a different kind of 'seeing' is meant—the seeing with the spirit,—the spiritual vision.

नेन्द्र अस्ति—Indra does not exist—means not that a particular deity called Indra does not exist, but that God does not exist Had Indra meant a particular deity, then the worshipper would have rejected Indra for some other Deity—say, Agni or Varuna or Savita—as it is done in polytheism. But it is clearly meant here that the non existence of Indra is not the non-existence of one of many deities, but of Divinity Itself. It is evident therefore that Indra is one of the many names of the *Divinity* and not the name of a particular deity Similarly when the sage says to Indra— न त्वावाँ अन्यो अमृत त्वदस्ति (ऋ. ६।२१।१०) '*There is no one like You* beside Yourself, O Immortal!' he refers not to a particular deity, but to God This implies very clearly that the Vedic religion is not polytheistic It contemplates One God.

(134)

The Awful

The following verse represents God the awful

द्यावा चिद् अस्मै पृथिवी नमेते
शुष्माचिदस्य पर्वता भयन्ते ।
यः सोमपा निचितो वज्रबाहुर्
यो वज्रहस्त· स जनास इन्द्रः ॥

ऋ २।१२।१३

'Heaven and earth bow before Him;
before His might the mountains tremble,
He, armed with the thunder bolt, deemed by us
as the Receiver of the soma libation,
He, the thunder wielder—O men, is Indra'

(135)

The Creator of Beautiful Forms

यो धर्ता भुवनानां
यो उस्राणाम् अपीच्या ३ वद नामानि गुह्या ।
स कवि. काव्या पुरु रूप द्यौरिव पुष्यति ॥ ऋ. ८।४१।५

"He who is the supporter of the worlds of life,
Who knows the secret, mysterious names of the morning beams,
He, Poet, cherishes manifold forms by his poetic power, even as heaven."

The verse is followed by a refrain used elsewhere too—

नभन्ताम् अन्यके समे
(May all others vanish)
[The Deity is Varuna].

One of the divine attributes is to know the light. (hence the term स्वर्विद् is applied to the Divine) which represents the principle of knowledge, goodness, beauty order etc Here the symbolic nature of light is indicated by the expression 'secret mysterious names of beams of light'.

The description of God as a Poet (कवि) and His *creative energy as poetic power (काव्य) is typically* Vedic and indicates the poetic approach to the Divine. Manifold form (पुरुरूप) indicates the forms of beauty and splendour. द्यौरिव—like the heaven or sky—seems to refer to the changes in the colour and form of clouds in the sky.

(136)

The Herdsman

अपश्यं गोपाम् अनिपद्यमानम्
आ च परा च पथिभिः चरन्तम्
स सध्रीचीः स विषूचीर् वसान
आ वरीवर्ति भुवनेष्वन्तः ॥

ऋ. १।१६४।३१, ऋ. १०।१७७।३

'I saw the Herdsman, *who never rests, who moves* forward and backward over the earth,
He, *wearing splendour that gathers together and* spreads out, travels constantly within the worlds'

The Deity is "Māyābheda", "the seeing through *maya or creation"—the vision of the Divinity in creation.* The physical idea suggested by the 'Herdsman' is that of the sun. But the tone of the verse is mystical. It refers to the Light of Lights beyond darkness.

The term "Herdsman" came to be applied to the Divinity or the Divine Person in later religious literat…

Krishna was a 'Gopa' (गोप) corresponding to the Vedic 'Gopā' (गोपा). In Christian literature the Divine Person is described as a shepherd (Pastor).

(137)

Worshipped in All Ages

इद् आ हि ते वेविषतः पुराजाः
प्रत्नास आसुः पुरुकृत् सखायः ।
ये मध्यमास उत नूतनास
उतावमस्य पुरुहूत बोधि ॥ ऋ. ६।२१।५

'Yea, here have been those worshipping thee, who were born in old times,
Thy ancient friends, O active Achiever of many deeds,
And Thy friends of the middle ages and of modern times.
Bethink Thee now, O invoked of many, of the youngest (friend)'.

The terms प्रत्न, मध्यम and नूतन exactly correspond to 'ancient', 'medieval' and 'modern'.

[The Deity is Indra]

(138)

The Guardian of Eternal Law.

The idea of the Herdsman is found in another conception of the Divinity.

त्रीणि पदा वि चक्रमे
विष्णुर् गोपा अदाभ्यः
अतो धर्माणि धारयन् ॥ ऋ. १।२२।१८

'He made three steps—
Vishnu, the Herdsman, the undeceivable,
Upholding, thenceforth, the eternal statutes.'

गोपा, herdsman, means the Guardian, the Protector of the universe

God upholds 'the eternal statutes' (धर्मन्). The conception of Divinity includes the fundamental principle of eternal law, moral and cosmic, or Rrta (ऋत), Eternal Order. According to the Veda, God is God because He upholds the eternal law This implies two things first, we cannot imagine a God whose will is arbitrary and who can do good or evil according to His wish · secondly, it is possible to adhere to *dharma*, eternal law, without even attaching oneself to the divine idea [The latter view was advocated by Gotama Buddha It is no wonder, firstly, that people worshipping Vishnu should be persuaded to attach themselves to *dharma* and not think of the Deity, in other words to become Buddhists, and secondly, that people who were attached to Dharma alone (Buddhists) should come to accept the Divinity too and become Vaishnavas and followers of the Vedic religion. The

transition, therefore, from the Vedic religion to Buddhism first, and later from Buddhism back to the Vedic religion was a simple, logical process, because the Vedic conception included both the Divine idea and the idea of *dharma*]

(139)

Source of Sweetness

यस्य त्री पूर्णा मधुना पदानि
अक्षीयमाणा स्वधया मदन्ति ।
य उ त्रिधातु पृथिवीम् उत द्याम्
एको दाधार भुवनानि विश्वा ॥ ऋ. १।१५४।४

" [Let the hymn lift itself to]
Vishnu whose three places are filled with sweetness,
imperishable places that joy with holy bliss;
Vishnu the One, who upholds the three fold—the earth, the sky and the worlds of living creatures."

The ideas of sweetness of peace and joy have been associated with the conception of the Divinity as Vishnu in all later religious literature. The Vaishnava cult distinguishes itself by the contemplation of these qualities.

When every God is described as "the One" in the Veda, it is clear that different divinities are but different aspects of the One Divine Being.

(140)

King and President

विशा राजानम् अद्भुतम्
अध्यक्ष धर्मणाम् इमम् ।
अग्निम् ईळे स उ श्रवत् ॥ ऋ. ८।४३।२४

"To the King of men, the wonderful,
the President of Eternal Laws,
to the Effulgent One, I pray; may He listen to it."

Here the Deity is described both as King and as President, implying respectively the Monarch and the Presiding or Overseeing Pover (अध्यक्ष).

(141)

The King

महाँ असि महिष वृष्ण्येभिर्
धनस्पृद् उग्र सहमानो अन्यान् ।
एको विश्वस्य भुवनस्य राजा
स योधया च क्षयया च जनान् ॥ ऋ. ३।४६।२

'Great art Thou, Mighty Lord, through valour
obtaining wealth, O fierce One, conquering others
Thyself alone the King of the whole universe,
Such as Thou art, Thou causest battle and
Thou peace.'

Here the Deity is conceived on the analogy of the martial earthly monarch. Compare also—

य एको अस्ति दंसना
महाँ उग्रो अभि व्रतैः । ऋ. ८।१।२७

'He who alone by his splendours is mighty, who is awful by eternal laws.'

Compare also—

वरिवस्य महामह— ऋ. ८।४६।१०

'Be gracious, O Greatest of the great!'

(142)

The Emperor

अग्निः प्रियेषु धामसु
कामो भूतस्य भव्यस्य
सम्राडेको विराजति ॥ साम. १७१०
८।२।११

'Agni in his beloved forms,
Love of what has been and what will be,
Shines, the sole Emperor.'

Here the Deity is described as the *Emperor*, an idea frequently found in Semitic religions

(143)

All Power is His

उत् त्वं मघवञ्छृणु
यस्ते वष्टि ववक्षि तत् ।
यद् वीळयासि वीळु तत् ॥ ऋ. ८।४५।६

"And, O mighty Lord! hear!
Thou givest to him who asks of thee.
Whatever Thou makest firm is firm."

[The Deity is Indra] Here the idea is about the same as is found in Semitic religious of an all powerful God whose will makes men what they are and who, out of His grace, gives to those who ask

(144)

The Terrible Chastiser

The following idea of a Terrible Chastiser is also in keeping with the Semitic conception of God:

विभया हि त्वावत
उग्राद् अभिप्रभङ्गिणः ।
दस्माद् अहम् ऋतीषहः ॥ ऋ. ८।४५।३५

"I am afraid of One like thee,
the mighty Crusher (of the wicked),
the Powerful, the Conqueror of all.
[The Deity is Indra]

(145)

The Forgiver of Sins

मा न एकस्मिन्नागसि
मा द्वयोर् उत त्रिषु
वधीर् मा शूर भूरिषु ॥ ऋ. ८।४५।३४

'Not for one sin nor for two, nor three,
O Hero! destroy me; nor yet for many sins'
[*The Deity is Indra*]

The prayer for the forgiveness of sins is typical of later forms of religion. The typical Vedic spirit is to approach the all-good through goodness, the all-powerful through power, the all pure through purity.

(146)

God's Emissaries

The idea of sin is particularly associated with the conception of Varuna whose emissaries detect all the truspasses of man.

परि स्पशो वरुणस्य स्मदिष्टा
उभे पश्यन्ति रोदसी सुमेके ।
ऋतावान. कवयो यज्ञधीरा.
प्रचेतसो य इषयन्त मन्म ॥ ऋ. ७।८७।३

'The emissaries of Varuna, sent on their errand,
survey both the worlds, that are well formed,
upholders of eternal Law, wise, holy,—
they further the praise songs of the noble-minded'

(147)

Creator of Splendid Things

वनेषु व्य १ न्तरिक्ष ततान
वाजम् अर्वत्सु पय उस्रियासु ।
हृत्सु क्रतु वरुणो अप्स्व १ ग्नि
दिवि सूर्यम् अदधात् सोममद्रौ ॥ ऋ. ५।८५।२

'Varuna has spread the vista in forests,
put vigour in horses, milk in kine,
set wise instincts in hearts, fire in the waters,
the sun in heaven and soma on the mountain.'

Here both the physical and the mental aspects of the universe are referred to

[The first line has been translated after Sayana as—"Varuna has extended the air in tree tops", which does not appear satisfactory , अन्तरिक्ष, like 'vigour in horses, milk in kine' etc, is something within the forests (वनेषु).]

(148)

The Brightener of Minds

महो अर्णः सरस्वती
प्र चेतयति केतुना
धियो विश्वा वि राजति ॥ ऋ १।३।१२

'Saraswati the mighty ocean (of light)
illumines with her light
She brightens all intellects

Saraswati is the Deity conceived as the inspirer of thought and knowledge Light is the usual Vedic symbol for knowledge In many verses धी (intelligence) is associated with Saraswati

आ सरस्वती सह धीभिरस्तु ॥ ऋ. ७।३५।११

'M , S watı, with thoughts be gracio '

(149)

The Inspirer

प्र णो देवी सरस्वती
वाजेभिर् वाजिनीवती
धीनाम् अवित्र्यवतु ॥ ऋ. ६।६१।४

'May the divine Saraswati,
rich in power,
Inspire our minds and protect us'

(150)

The Purifier

पावका नः सरस्वती
वाजेभिर् वाजिनीवती
यज्ञं वष्टु धियावसुः ॥ ऋ. १।३।१०

'May Saraswati, the purifier,
rich in power,
With intellects as her treasure,
Desire our sacrifice'

(151)

Rouser of the true and the Good

चोदयित्री सूनृतानां
चेतन्ती सुमतीनाम् ।
यज्ञं दधे सरस्वती ॥ ऋ. १।३।११

'*Inspirer of the truthful,*
rouser of the good minded,
Saraswati accepts the offering'

The *spiritual inspiration* comes only to the true and good. One who seeks higher knowledge must live a noble life

(152)

Giver of Renown

The etymological sense of the word 'Saraswati' is 'Lady of the lake' (सरस् + वती). The idea of a stream often goes to the conception of the Deity, though the association with the higher life of intellect remains unchanged

अम्बितमे नदीतमे
देवितमे सरस्वति ।
अप्रशस्ता इव स्मसि
प्रशस्तिम् अम्ब नस्कृधि ॥

ऋ. २।४१।१६

'Motherliest of mothers noblest of rivers,
Godliest of Goddesses! O Saraswati
we are as of no repute
Mother, give us high renown'

Though it is a prayer to the noblest of rivers, it is a prayer for intellectual achievement —high renown

(153)

The Mother

प्रति मे स्तोमम् अदितिर् जगृभ्यात्
सूनुं न माता हृद्यं सुशेवम् ।

ऋ. ५।४२।२

(149)

The Inspirer

प्र णो देवी सरस्वती
वाजेभिर् वाजिनीवती
धीनाम् अवित्र्यवतु ॥ ऋ. ६।६१।४

'May the divine Saraswati,
rich in power,
Inspire our minds and protect us'

(150)

The Purifier

पावका नः सरस्वती
वाजेभिर् वाजिनीवती
यज्ञं वष्टु धियावसुः ॥ ऋ. १।३।१०

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rich in power,
with intellects as her treasure,
Desire our sacrifice

(151)

Rouser of the true and the Good

चोदयित्री सूनृताना
चेतन्ती सुमतीना ।
यज्ञं दधे सरस्वती ॥ ऋ. १।३।११

'Inspirer of the truthful,
rouser of the good minded
Saraswati accepts the offering'

The spiritual inspiration comes only to the true and good One who seeks higher knowledge must live a noble life

(152)

Giver of Renown

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अम्बितमे नदीतमे
देवितमे सरस्वति ।
अप्रशस्ता इव स्मसि
प्रशस्तिम् अम्ब नस्कृधि ॥
ऋ. २।४१।१६

'Motherliest of mothers, noblest of rivers,
Godliest of Goddesses! O Saraswati
we are as of no repute
Mother, give us high renown'

Though it is a prayer to the noblest of rivers, it is a prayer for intellectual achievement,—high renown.

(153)

The Mother

प्रति मे स्तोमम् अदितिर् जगृभ्यात्
सूनु न माता हृद्य सुशेवम् ।
ऋ. ५।४२।२

'May Aditi my praise song accept,
as a mother her dear heart gladdening son.'

(154)

The Mighty Mother

महीम् ऊ षु मातरं सुव्रतानाम्
ऋतस्य पत्नीम् अवसे हुवेम ।
तुविक्षत्राम् अजरन्तीम् उरूचीं
सुशर्माणम् अदितिं सुप्रणीतिम् ॥

य. २१।५

'The Mighty Mother of those whose sway is just,
the Queen of Order,—we call on for succour:
We call on the strong Ruler, the never-decaying,
the wide-expanding,
Aditi—the good protectress, the gracious guide'

The expression, 'Mighty Mother' implies the conception of the supreme Divinity in terms of *motherhood*. (This idea has been popularised in later times by Tantra).

(155)

Motherliest Physicians

ओमानम् आपो मानुषीर् अमृक्तं
धात तोकाय तनयाय शं योः ।
यूयं हि ष्ठा भिषजो मातृतमा
विश्वस्य स्थातुर् जगतो जनित्रीः ॥ ऋ. ६।५०।७

'Waters! Friends of men! in peace and in trouble,
give your blessings to our sons and grandsons,
For ye are the most motherly physicians,
the mothers of all that stands and all that moves'

(156)

Healing Power of Waters

The medicative powers of water that were known to Vedic Aryans have only recently been discovered by modern people. Compare

अप्सु मे सोमो अब्रवीद्
अन्तर्विश्वानि भेषजा ।
अग्निं च विश्वशम्भुवम्
आपश्च विश्वभेषजीः ॥ ऋ. १।२३।२०

'Within the waters—Soma has told me—
are all medicines that heal,
And Agni who blesses all.
The waters contain all medicines'

(157)

The Divine Pair

प्रातर्यावाणा रथ्येव वीरा
ऽजेव यमा वरमा सचेथे ।
मेने इव तन्वा ३ शुम्भमाने
दम्पतीव क्रतुविदा जनेषु ॥ २

शृङ्गेव न प्रथमा गन्तम् अर्वाक्
छफाविव जर्भुराणा तरोभि ।
चक्रवाकेव प्रति वस्तोर् उस्रा
अर्वाञ्चा यात रथ्येव शक्रा ॥ ३

नावेव नः पारयत युगेव
नभ्येव न उपधीव प्रधीव ।
श्वानेव नो अरिषण्या तनूना
खृगलेव विस्रस पातम् अस्मान् ॥ ४

वातेवाजुर्या नद्येव रीति
रक्षी इव चक्षुषा यातम् अर्वाक् ।
हस्ताविव तन्वे शंभविष्ठा
पादेव नो नयत वस्यो अच्छ ॥ ५

ओष्ठाविव मध्वास्ने वदन्ता
स्तनाविव पिप्यत जीवसे नः ।
नासेव नस्तन्वो रक्षितारा
कर्णाविव सुश्रुता भूतमस्मे ॥ ६

हस्तेव शक्तिम् अभि सददी न
क्षामेव न समजत रजांसि ।
इमा गिरो अश्विना युष्मयन्ती
क्ष्णोत्रेणेव स्वधिति स शिशीतम् ॥७॥ ऋ. २।३९

Going in the morning, like two car borne heroes,
like a pair of goats, ye come electing,
Like two damsels embellishing their bodies,
like a wise married couple among the people (2)

Like a pair of horns, come first towards us,
like a pair of hoofs with rapid motion,
Like two chakravaks come in the grey of morning,
come, ye mighty! like two chariot wheels at dawn (3)

Like two boats, take us across (the river),
like the naves, like the yokes, like spokes and fellies, save us,
Like two dogs that injure not the body,
like two crutches protect us against falling. (4)

Like two winds that age not,
like two rivers that come to a confluence,
Like two eyes, come before us, with the power of vision
Come like two hands, most helpful to the body,
like two feet take us towards what is good. (5)

Like two lips that with the mouth speak honey,
like two breasts that nourish our life,
Like two nostrils that preserve our body,
be to us, like two ears that hear well. (6)

पदे इव निहिते दस्मे अन्तर्
तयोर् अन्यद् गुह्यम् आविर् अन्यत्।
सध्रीचीना पथ्या३सा विषूची
महद् देवानाम् असुरत्वम् एकम् ॥ ऋ. ३।५५।१५

'Different each from the other, you Two
have made yourselves twin beauties;
one of the Twain is bright, the other dark.
And yet, these Two, the white and the red, are sisters.
Great is the single divinty of the Gods,' (11)
"The Two are, as it were, treasured in a wondrous place;
Of the Twain one is hidden, the other manifest,
One common pathway is parted in two.
Great is the single divinity of the Gods ' (15)
[The subject of the verses is Day and Night.]

(160)

Virgin Motherhood

आक्षित् पूर्वास्वपरा अनूरुत्
सद्यो जातासु तरुणीष्वन्तः।
अन्तर्वतीः सुवते अप्रवीता
महद् देवानाम् असुरत्वम् एकम् ॥

ऋ. ३।५५।५

'Lying in the old (plants) he grows again in
the younger,

quickly in the tender, newly born,
Though they are unimpregnated, he makes them fruitful,
Great is the single divinity of the Gods'

The Deity is Agni, the Divine Energy inspiring life

The Christian theory of virgin birth is obviously derived from the original conception of plant life The plant, growing up in all freshness from the earth, becomes fruitful The fruit seems to have only the mother and no earthly father,—to have derived its life from a heavenly Father—the Divine Spirit that vitalises all life

[The Veda calls this Divine Spirit Agni—the Deity of the verse]

(161)

One who stays Flowing Waters

स ईं मही धुनिम् एतोर् अरम्णात्
सो अस्नातॄन् अपारयत् स्वस्ति ।
त उत्स्नाय रयिम् अभि प्र तस्थुः
सोमस्य ता मद इन्द्रश्चकार ॥ ऋ. २।१५।५

'The mighty roaring stream he stayed from flowing,
he carried those, who swim not, safely across,
They having crossed attained to riches
That Indra did in the Soma's rapture'

We are reminded here of the Old Testament account of the crossing of the sea through Divine grace by Moses and his followers.

The next line puts us in mind of a poetic idea ound in Vaishnava songs—

सोदञ्च सिंधुम् अरिणान् महित्वा । ऋ. २।१५।६

'With his might he made the streams flow upward'

(162)

For Him the Dawn is Lovely

तुभ्यम् उषास. शुचय. परावति
भद्रा वस्त्रा तन्वते दसु रश्मिषु
चित्रा नव्येषु रश्मिषु ।
तुभ्य धेनु सबर्दुघा विश्वा वसूनि दोहते ।
अजनयो मरुतो वक्षणाभ्यो दिव आ वक्षणाभ्य॰ ॥
ऋ. १।१३४।४

For Thee the radiant Dawns in the far off sky
spread out their lovely garments in wondrous beams,
splendid in their new born beams,
For Thee the nectar yielding cow yields all treasures,
The Maruts thou hast engendered from the wombs, the heaven's wombs

[Here the Deity is Vayu the Lord of the sky]

The metre is very graceful

(163)

The Beautiful Troop

विप्रासो न मन्मभिः स्वाध्यो
देवाव्यो ३ न यज्ञैःस्वप्नसः ।
राजानो न चित्रा सुसंदृशः
क्षितीनां न मर्या अरेपसः॥१
ग्रावाणो न सूरयः सिन्धुमातर
आदर्दिरासो अद्रयो न विश्वहा ।
शिशूला न क्रीळयः सुमातरो
महाग्रामो न यामन्नुत त्विषा ॥६   ऋ १०।७८

'Ye by your hymns are like noble minded sages,
skilful, inviting Gods as by sacrifice,
Wonderous looking like kings decked in splendour,
like sinless gallants, leaders of people.
Princes born of the stream, like press stones,
Like crushing stones that crush all;
Playful like children that have beauteous mothers,
Like a great host marching with splendour.'

[The Deities are Maruts.]

The simile in the seventh line brings a graceful picture of family life before the mind's eye.

(164)

Social Courtesy

"ओ षु स्वसारः कारवे शृणोत
ययौ वो दूराद् अनसा रथेन ।
नि षू नमध्वं भवता सुपारा
अधोअक्षाः सिन्धवः स्रोत्याभिः ॥"
"आ ते कारो शृणवामा वचांसि
ययाथ दूराद् अनसा रथेन ।
नि ते नंसै पीप्यानेव योषा
मर्यायेव कन्या शश्वचै ते ॥"

ऋ. ३।३३।९-१०

The Sage's address to two Rivers

" Sisters! listen to the poet
who has come to you with wagon and car,
Bow lowly down, be easy to cross,
stay, Rivers, with your streams below
the axles."

One of the Rivers replies :

" Yes, singer, we will listen to thy words,
because thou comest from far with
wagon and car
I will bend to thee like a nursing mother,
I will yield to thee as a maiden to her lover "

These two stanzas are taken out of a beautiful ballad of thirteen stanzas (Rig. III. 33.)

Note the courteous manner of address by a man to members of the opposite sex—'sisters' (स्वसारः). This courtesy has persisted in India through thousands o years

The beauty of the last two lines is superb

(165)

Two Beautiful-winged Birds

In the following *symbolic verse*, the *two beautiful winged Birds* have been understood through the ages to refer to the relation between the soul (जीवात्मन्) and the Over soul (परमात्मन्):

> द्वा सुपर्णा सयुजा सखाया
> समानं वृक्षं परि षस्वजाते ।
> तयोर् अन्य. पिप्पलं स्वाद्वत्त्य-
> नश्नन्न्यो अभि चाकशीति ॥
>
> ऋ १।१६४।२०

Two beautiful w nged B r ls
I it together (by love), friend-
have found their abode in the same tree
One of them eats the sweet *pippala* fr it
the other, that does not eat, overlooks all

[The verse has been quoted in Upanishads]

(166)

" The Beautiful winged "

In the *following* the *Beautiful winged* (*Bird*)—सुपर्ण—stands for the Divinity

सुपर्णं विप्राःकवयो वचोभिर्
एकं सन्तं बहुधा कल्पयन्ति।
छन्दांसि च दधतो अध्वरेषु
ग्रहान् सोमस्य मिमते द्वादश ॥ऋ.१०।११४।५

"The Beautiful winged, though He is one, the wise poets shape, with songs, in many figures

And while they grasp the hymns at sacrifices, they measure out twelve chalices of Soma"

The verse implies that there is One God spoken of in many ways by the sage poets and worshipped by them by the recitation of hymns and offering of soma juice at *yajnas*.

(167) The tree with Inverted Roots.

In the following we find the symbol common in post vedic literature, of the inverted tree

अबुध्ने राजा वरुणो वनस्यो—
र्ध्वं स्तूपं ददते पूतदक्षः।
नीचीनाः स्थुरुपरि बुध्न एषाम्
अस्मे अन्तर्निहिताःकेतव.स्युः ॥ ऋ १।२४।७

"In the baseless region, King Varuna,
of hallowed power, *holds erect*
the tree's stem,
Its rays, whose root is high above,
stream downward
Deep may they sink within us,
and be hidden." ~
cf. The Bhagavad Gita.

ऊर्ध्वमूलम् अवःशाखम् अश्वत्थ प्राहुर् अव्ययम् ।१५।१

'They have called the Asvattha with roots above and branches below, indestructible '

(168) The Supreme Sage

सो अङ्गिरोभिर् अङ्गिरस्तमो भूद्
वृषा वृषभि सखिभिः सखा सन् ।
ऋग्मिभिर् ऋग्मी गातुभिर् ज्येष्ठो
मरुत्वान् नो भवत्विन्द्र ऊती ॥ ऋ.१।१००।४

'He, Indra, was the best Angiras among Angirasas,
being mighty among the mighty, a friend with friends.

The chanter of verse among verse chanters, the seniormost of singers.

May Indra, at the head of Maruts, be our succour'.

According to this style of speech, the Divinity can be spoken of in the superlative degree of any term signifying goodness and nobility

(169) The Great Comforter

According to Vedic grammar the superlative suffix is joined not only to adjectives, but also to substantives In the above we find the superlative in तम, in the following verse, it is in इष्ठ (corresponding to English est).

कया तच्छृण्वे शच्या शचिष्ठो
यया कृणोति मुहु का चिद् ऋष्वः ।
पुरु दाशुषे विचयिष्ठो अंहो
ऽथा दधाति द्रविणं जरित्रे ॥ ऋ. ४।२०।९

'By what might is He renowned as the mightiest,
Wherewith the Lofty One makes battle?
The best Soother of the worshipper's great sorrow
He gives riches to the singer'

Here शचिष्ठ, mightiest, and, विचयिष्ठ, the best soother, are superlative terms applied to the Divinity.

(170) The Supreme Being

In the following verse, the opening verse of Rigveda, the Deity is called the supreme Donor.

अग्निम् ईळे पुरोहित
यज्ञस्य देवम् ऋत्विजम् ।
होतार रत्नधातमम् । ऋ. १।१।१

I pray to Agni, the Priest, God of the sacrifice, the Minister of the service

The Offerer of oblation, the best Giver of treasure.

Superlative terms applied to the Deity, indicating the supreme state of every value of life, are found scattered over the Vedas *It is important to note that* the Deities are named differently—Agni, Indra etc.—but each represents the supreme quality, in other words, each Deity represents the supreme Being in a *particular way*

The following are some of the superlative terms

रत्नधातमः (ऋ. १।१।१)– the supreme giver of treasure (spoken of Agni)

वीरवत्तमः (ऋ १।१।३)–the great leader of heroes (Agni)

पुरुतमः पुरूणाम् (ऋ. १।५।२)–Fullest among the fulls Richest of the rich (spoken of Indra)

रथीतमः रथीना (ऋ. १।११।१)–Supreme among car borne heroes (Indra)

यविष्ठ (ऋ. १।२६।२) Most youthful (Agni)

महिष्ठ (ऋ. १।३०।१) Most liberal (Indra)

अङ्गिरस्तमः (ऋ. १।३१।२) the supreme Angira. (Agni)

यजिष्ठं (ऋ. १।४४।५) best adored (Agni)

वेधस्तम (ऋ. १।७५।२) the wisest (Agni)

वाजसातम (ऋ. १।७८।३) the best gainer of power (Agni)

वृत्रहन्तम (ऋ १।७८।४) The Supreme Vritra slayer (destroyer of darkness, evil) (Agni)

सुगोपातम (ऋ. १।८६।१)—the best of guardians (Maruts)

जुष्टतमासो नृतमासः (ऋ. १।८७।१)– most beloved and manliest (Maruts)

मन्द्रिष्ठ (ऋ. १।९७।३)–best praiser (Agni)

तवस्तमा (ऋ. १।१०९।५)–mightiest (Indra Agni)

सहसा सहन्तमः (ऋ. १।१२७।९) Most victorious with conquering strength (Agni)

'By what might is He renowned as the mightiest,
Wherewith the Lofty One makes battle?
The best Soother of the worshipper's great sorrow
He gives riches to the singer'

Here शचिष्ठ, mightest, and, विचयिष्ठ, the best soother, are superlative terms applied to the Divinity.

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यज्ञस्य देवम् ऋत्विजम् ।
होतार रत्नधातमम् । ऋ. १।१।१

I pray to Agni, the Priest, God of the sacrifice, *the Minister of the service.*

The Offerer of oblation, the best Giver of treasure.

Superlative terms applied to the Deity, indicating the supreme state of every value of life, are found scattered over the Vedas It is important to note that the Deities are named *differently*—*Agni,* Indra *etc.*—but each represents the supreme quality, in other words, each Deity represents the supreme Being in a particular way.

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वीरवत्तमः (ऋ १।१।३)–*the great leader of heroes* (Agni)

पुरुतमः पुरूणाम् (ऋ. १।५।२)–*Fullest among the fulls* Richest of the rich. (spoken of Indra)

रथीतमः रथीनां (ऋ. १।११।१)–Supreme among car-borne heroes. (Indra)

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यजिष्ठं (ऋ. १।४४।५) best adored (Agni)

वेधस्तम (ऋ. १।७५।२) *the wisest* (Agni)

वाजसातम (ऋ. १।७८।३) the best gainer of power (Agni)

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मन्दिष्ठ (ऋ. १।९७।३)–best praiser (Agni)

तवस्तमा (ऋ. १।१०९।५)–mightiest (Indra Agni)

सहसा सहन्तमः (ऋ. १।१२७।९) Most victorious with conquering strength (Agni)

द्युम्नितमः (ऋ. १।१२७।९)–most mighty (Indra)

शंतमः (ऋ. १।१२८।७) kindest, most blissful (Agni)

ओजिष्ठ (ऋ. १।१२९।१०) Strongest (Indra]

सुश्रवस्तमः (ऋ. १।१३१।७) readiest to hear (Indra)

अपसाम् अपस्तमः (ऋ. १।१६०।४) most skilful among the skilled (Creator)

श्रेष्ठः (ऋ. १।१६१।१) best (Ribhu)

(३।२२।३) *most excellent (Agni)*

अवृकतमः [ऋ. १।१७४।१०] most gentle hearted (Indra)

इन्द्रतमा [ऋ. १।१८२।२] – most Indra-like (Asvins]

मरुत्तमा [,,]–most Marut-like (Asvins]

दंसिष्ठा [,,]– most wonderful (,,)

प्रेष्ठ [ऋ. १।१८६।३]– most beloved (Agni)

[६।२६।८]— ,, (Indra)

तुविष्टमो नरां [ऋ. १।१८६।६] Strongest of heroes (Twashta)

सुरभिष्टम नरां [ऋ. १।१८६।७] Most delightful of Heroes. (Twashta)

यशस्तमः [ऋ. ६।८।१] The most splendid one (Agni)

सतां ज्येष्ठतम (ऋ. २।१६।१) The best of the good (Indra)

तवस्तमस् तवसां (ऋ. २।३३।३) Mightiest of the; mighty (Rudra)

भिषक्तम त्वा भिषजां (ऋ. २।३३।४) Best of physicians (Rudra)

अम्बितमे नदीतमे देवितमे (ऋ. २।४१।१६) Motherliest best of rivers, Godliest (Saraswati)

कवितमः (ऋ. ३।१४।१) Best of Poets (Agni)

(ऋ. ५।८५।६) „ wisest (Varuna)

नृतम (ऋ. ३।१९।३) Most rich in men (Agni)

„ (ऋ. ३।३२।१७) „ (Indra)

विप्रतम (ऋ. ३।३९।७) The noblest singer (Indra)

पुरुतम (ऋ. ३।३९।७) Most zealous („)

इनतमः (ऋ. ३।४९।२) Most vigorous („)

वर्षिष्ठम् (ऋ. ३।५६।२) The Highest (All Gods)

पितृतमः पितॄणाम् (ऋ. ४।१७।१७) Most fatherly of fathers (Indra)

नृतमः (ऋ. ४।२२।२) Most Heroic (Indra)

देवो देवतमः (ऋ. ४।२२।३) Divinest God (Do)

आशमिष्ठः (ऋ. ४।४३।२) Most quick of movement (Aswins)

शंभविष्ठः („) Greatest bestower of bliss

चेतिष्ठः (ऋ. ५।२७।१) Most famous of nobles (Agni)

वृत्रहन्तम (ऋ. ५।३५।६) Greatest of the slayers of Vritra, Power of darkness (Indra)

,, (ऋ. ८।७४।४) (Agni)

शविष्ठ (ऋ. ५।३८।२) Mightiest (Indra)

दीर्घश्रुत्तम (,,) Most widely famed (,,)

कवितमः कवीनाम् (ऋ. ५।४२।३) Sagest of the Sages (Savita)

मन्द्रतमः (ऋ. ६।११।२) Most joyous (Agni)

वेधस्तमः (ऋ.६।१४।२) Wisest. (Agni)

सहिष्ठ (ऋ. ६।१८।४) Most Potent (Indra)

वरिष्ठ (ऋ. ६।३७।४) Supreme (Indra)

मघोना तुविकूर्मितमः (,,) Most efficacious of the princes. (Indra)

वृषन्तमः (ऋ. ६।५७।४) Most valiant (Indra)

नेदिष्ठम् आप्यम् (ऋ. ७।१५।१) Nearest kin (Agni)

दीर्घश्रुत्तम (ऋ. ७।८१।१) Most far famed (Ushas)

मदिन्तम (ऋ. ८।१।१९) Best of gladdeners (Indra)

(ऋ. ९।१५।८) —(Soma)

शोभिष्ठ (ऋ ८।३।२१) Fairest (Indra)

दस्युहन्तम (ऋ. ८।३९।८) Best slayer of the wicked (Dasyu) — (Agni)

beauty, splendour, wonderfulness, adorableness, poetry and music, and eminence, fame and wealth (spiritual and material)—these are some of the qualities that have been extolled, and no quality opposed to these has received appreciation.

From this we can construct the Vedic code of life—moral as well as aesthetic.

In popular polytheism gods and goddesses are good as well as bad. In Greek polytheism there are gods that are ugly, disabled and at least partly evil. In Homer, we find Hera speaking to Zeus in very uncomplimentary terms. But the Vedic gods always stand for the perfection in truth, goodness and beauty, in physical form and in the elementary qualities of energy and valour.

(171) One Divinity Beyond All Gods

विश्वेदेते जनिमा सं विविक्तो
महो देवान् बिभ्रती न व्यथेते।
एजद् ध्रुवं पत्यते विश्वम् एकम्
चरत् पतत्रि विषुणं वि जातम् ॥

ऋ. ३।५४।८

All that exists these two
(Sky and Earth) keep asunder,
though bearing the mighty
Devas (Gods) they reel not,

One All is Lord of what
moves and what is fixed,
of what walks, what flies,
—this multiform creation.'

The mighty Devas (Gods) are borne by sky and Earth; hence they are the splendid phenomena of Nature — in their material aspect. Beyond their splendour there is the One Divine Essence (एकम्) which is also All (विश्वम्) and which lords it over (पत्यते) the world of phenomena.

Herein lies the secret of Vibhuti-yoga The Vedic sage views the beauty of Nature in two ways one, material, where the universe shines in splendour; another, spiritual, where he realises the presence of a Divine Power beyond the splendour

Note the neuter form of "One"—एकम्. Compare

आनीद् अवातं स्वधया तद् एक
तस्माद्धान्यन् न परः किं चनास । ऋ. १०।१२९।२

'The One breathed air less by self impulse,—
A part from It was nothing whatsoever.'

The use of the neuter gender distinguishes the Vedic conception of One Divine Being or Essence from the usual monotheistic view of one Divine Individual, generally localised and particularised.

In the Vedas here we find the metaphysical, as distinguished from the theological, approach to the Divine Idea.

कर्मयोग

THE PATH OF ACTION.

THE PATH OF ACTION.

The Path of Action (कर्मयोग) is as important, according to the Vedas, as the Path of knowledge (ज्ञानयोग). In later religious literature we find a tendency to consider action useless or at best as a necessary evil, but in the Vedas action is accepted as an essential part of life.

Karma-yoga means, primarily, the acceptance of our existence on the material plane This leads to the building up of the body and the sharpening of the mind and to living a full life with health and vigour and in the joy of being.

Secondly, karma yoga is accepting the battle of life and fighting it with a will to victory and survival. Survival, in the Vedic sense, does not apply to mere biological existence. it applies also to moral and spiritual life Hence the battle of life is the battle between good and evil. Calling up all that is most energetic and valiant in man to its service. Thus Karma-yoga is based on the kshatriya spirit, the heroic outlook on life.

The prayer of the Karma yogin is, therefore, a prayer for health and strength, for a perfect body and long life and for the good things of the earth , it is also a prayer for valour and power and for victory over all kinds of evil.

The God of the Karma-yogin is the ideal Hero and Warrior. The Vedic Indra is the most typical representation of this conception

(1) Prayer for a long life

तच् चक्षुर् देवहित शुक्रम् उच्चरत् ।
पश्येम शरदः शत जीवेम शरदः शतम् ॥

ऋ० ७।६६।१६

" May we, for a hundred autumns, see that bright eye (of the sky, i e the sun) God ordained, arise may we live for a hundred autumns "

This is an expression of the will to life— a long radiant life The Veda sets a hundred years as the norm of human life

(2) Prayer for a full life

The Yajur Veda expands the idea of the verse

तच् चक्षुर् देवहितं
पुरस्ताच्छुक्रम् उच्चरत् ।
पश्येम शरदः शतम् जीवेम शरदः शत
शृणुयाम शरदः शत
प्रब्रवाम शरदः शतम्
अदीनाः स्याम शरदः शत
भूयश्च शरदः शतात् ॥ शु. य. ३६।२४

" May we, for a hundred autumns see that bright
eye—God—ordained arise before us,
May we live a hundred autumns;
May we hear for a hundred autumns,
May we speak well for a hundred autumns,
May we hold our heads high for a hundred autumns,
Yea, even beyond a hundred autumns. "

The Yajurveda interprets the Rigvedic verse by saying that living a hundred years is not just dragging on the existence, it is living with the bodily organs in the fittest condition, and *living an honourable life,* with the head held high. It also adds that hundred years need not be taken actually as the utmost limit of existence, we may live even longer.

(3) The Complete Life.

The Atharvaveda reproduces the same idea in the following —

पश्येम शरदः शतम् ॥ १ ॥
जीवेम शरदः शतम् ॥ २ ॥
बुध्येम शरदः शतम् ॥ ३ ॥
रोहेम शरदः शतम् ॥ ४ ॥
पूषेम शरदः शतम् ॥ ५ ॥
भवेम शरदः शतम् ॥६ ॥
भूयेम शरदः शतम् ॥ ७ ॥
भूयसीः शरदः शतात् ॥ ८ ॥ अ. १९।६७

1 May we see through a hundred autumns.
2 May we live through a hundred autumns
3 May we know through a hundred autumns
4 May we rise through a hundred autumns
5 May we prosper through a hundred autumns.
6 May we live (remain established) through a hundred autumns
7 May we become (grow) through a hundred autumns
8. Even more than a hundred autumns

Note that in this expanded conception of a complete life, the pursuit of knowledge has been included as an essential requirement (बुद्धम). The word Buddhi (बुद्धि) came to mean the highest mental power [cf *Bhagavad Gita* III 42 — इन्द्रियेभ्य पर मन. । मनसस्तु परा बुद्धिः । *manas* (Mind) is beyond the senses, and beyond *manas* is *Buddhi* (Higher Intellect]

(4) Prayer for Vision

चक्षुर् नो धाहि चक्षुषे
चक्षुर् निख्यै तनूभ्य ।
स चेदं वि च पश्येम ॥

ऋ १०।१५८।४

" Give sight to our eyes ·
Sight to our bodies so that they can see
May we discern and survey the world."

Here not only the physical but also the mental sight is prayed for.

(5) Prayer for all-round Existence

The Atharva veda also expresses the idea of a full life in different words ·

वाङ्म आसन् नसोः प्राणश्चक्षुर् अक्ष्णोः श्रोत्रं कर्णयोः ।
अपलिताः केशा अशोणा दन्ता बहु बाह्वोर् बलम् ॥ १ ॥
ऊर्वोर् ओजो जङ्घयोर् जवः पादयोः ।
प्रतिष्ठा अरिष्टानि मे सर्वात्मानिभृष्टः ॥ २ ॥ अ. १९।६०

1 " May I have voice in my mouth, breath in my nostrils,
Sight in my eyes, hearing in my ears,
hair that has not turned grey, teeth that have not decayed,
and great strength in my arms.

2. " May I have power in my thighs, swiftness in my legs, steadfastness in my feet
May all my members be uninjured and my soul unimpaired. "

Here a noble ideal of physical culture has been set up

(6) Prayer for Health

वात आ वातु भेषज
शम्भु मयोभु नो हृदे
प्र ण आयूँषि तारिषत् ॥

ऋ० १०।१८६।१

May Vata blow His balm on us,
Vata — the Source of
well being and health
May He lengthen our life

Here Vata (literally, Air) is a symbolic name of God as is the Giver of life and health Non figuratively fresh air blows us well being (शम्), health (मयस्) and life (आयुस्)

(7) Full span of Life

शतमिन्नु शरदो अन्ति देवा
यत्रा नश्चक्रा जरस तनूनाम् ।
पुत्रासो यत्र पितरो भवन्ति
मा नो मध्या रीरिषतायुर्गन्तो ॥

ऋ १।८९।९

A hundred autumns stand before us, Gods!
Within whose space you bring our bodies to
decay,

Within whose space the sons become fathers,
Break not in the middle the course of fleeting
life

Life should be lived to the full extent—one should not die prematurely

(8) **Protection against old age**

मा नो अग्ने सख्या पित्र्याणि
प्र मर्षिष्ठा अभि विदुष्कविः सन्।
नभो न रूपं जरिमा मिनाति
पुरा तस्या अभिशस्तेरधीहि॥

ऋ १।७१।१०

'O Agni! break not our ancestral friendship,
being one with deep knowledge and a sage
Like the (overspreading) cloud old age impairs
the form
before that evil comes near, protect me

Compare the following prayer for perpetual youth

अजरासस्ते सख्ये स्याम।

ऋ ७।५४।२

'O God! May we be ever-youthful in thy
friendship

One should not only have long life but also prolonged youth and vigour

(9) Life of Freedom

उरु णस्तन्वे तन
उरु क्षयाय नस्कृधि ।
उरु णो यन्धि जीवसे ॥ ऋ० ८।६८।१२

'Give freedom for our bodies,
Give freedom for our dwelling,
Give freedom for our life'

Uru (उरु) means freedom, wide room for free movement, absence of constraint Compare—

देवीः षळुर्वीर् उरु नः कृणोत । ऋ० १०।१२८।५

'Ye (Six Divine Expanses! grant us freedom'

(Six Divine Expanses imply the six quarters—the four directions and upper and lower spaces)

(10) *The Happy Life*

इन्द्र श्रेष्ठानि द्रविणानि धेहि
चित्तिं दक्षस्य सुभगत्वम् अस्मे ।
पोषं रयीणाम् अरिष्टिं तनूनां
स्वाद्मानं वाचः सुदिनत्वम् अह्नाम् ॥ ऋ० २।२१।६

'O God! bestow on us the best treasures
The efficient mind, and good fortune,
The increase of wealth, the health of bodies,
The sweetness of speech and the fairness
of days'

Our days (अह्न) should not be just days, but fair, *bright*, happy days (सुदिन):

(11) Prayer for wealth

भूर्भुवः स्वः
सुप्रजाः प्रजाभिः स्याम
सुवीरो वीरैः सुपुषः पोषैः ॥

य. (वा) ८।५३

'Earth, Ether, Sky!
May we be rich in off spring,
rich in heroes, rich in nourishing food!'

The Veda accepts life in its fulness. It does not reject, or neglect what is worldly (ऐहिक), as many religious sects, attached to other worldly (पारलौकिक) interests, do.

(12) Strength for all

बलं धेहि तनूषु नो
बलम् इन्द्रानळुत्सु नः ।
बलं तोकाय तनयाय जीवसे
त्वं हि बलदा असि ॥

ऋ. ३।५३।१८

"O God! give strength to our bodies, strength to our draught bulls, strength to our seed and progeny that they may live,
For Thou art He who giveth strength.

(13) Health, Life and Light of Intellect

तनूपा ऽ अग्ने ऽ सि तन्वं मे
पाह्यायुर्दा ऽ अग्ने ऽ स्यायुर्मे देहि।
वर्चोदा ऽ अग्ने ऽ सि वर्चो मे देहि।
अग्ने यन्मे तन्वा ऽ ऊनं तन्म ऽ आपृण ॥

य. (वा) ३।१७

'Thou God! art protector of the body protect my body
Thou art giver of long life give me long life
Thou art giver of intellectual brilliance give me intellectual brilliance
O God! whatever is wanting in my body, supply that for me'

(14) Intellectual Brilliance

मयि वर्चो अथो यशो यो यज्ञस्य यत्पय ।
तन्मयि प्रजापतिर् दिवि द्याम् इव दृंहतु ॥

अ ६।६९।३

'In me there be the brightness of intellect, fame, the power that is in sacrifice,
That may the Lord of creation establish firmly in me like the light in heaven
Similar is the prayer for higher intelligence (धी, मेधा), See above Nos 39 41.

The Path of Action II Heroism in the Battle of Life.

(15) Valour and Wisdom

अस्मे वो ऽ अस्त्विन्द्रियम्
अस्मे नृम्णम् उत क्रतुर्
अस्मे वर्चां ऽसि सन्तु व. ।

य. (वा) ९।२२

'In us be your power,
in us your manly vigour and wisdom,
and brightness of *intellect*'

(16) Prayer for Manliness

इमा ब्रह्मेन्द्र तुभ्यं शंसि ।।
दा नृभ्यो नृणा शूर शव. ।
तेभिर् भव सक्रतुर्येषु चाकन्–
नुत त्रायस्व गृणत उत स्तीन् ॥

ऋ. १०।१४८।४

"These holy prayers, O God,
I have sung to thee.
Grant to the men, the
Strength of men, O Hero!
Be of one mind with
those in whom thou joyest,
And protect the singers and
their companions"

(17). Victorious wisdom.

ये स्था मनोर्यज्ञियास्ते शृणोतन
यद्वो देवा ईमहे तद् ददातन ।
जैत्रं क्रतुं रयिमद् वीरवद् यशस्
तद् देवानाम् अवो अद्या वृणीमहे ॥

ऋ. १०।३६।१०

'O ye who are adorable to man! listen;
Give us Gods! what we pray for
Victorious wisdom, fame with wealth and with heroes.
We crave to day this grace of the Gods.

(18) Intelligence and Valour

स नो दात मरुतो वाजिनं रथ
आपानं ब्रह्म चितयद् दिवे दिवे ।
इषं स्तोतृभ्यो वृजनेषु कारवे
सनिं मेधाम् अरिष्टं दुष्टरं सहः ॥

ऋ. २।३४।७

Give us, O Maruts, a steed mighty in the car,
Prevailing prayer that brings remembrance day by day.
Give food to your worshippers, and to your bards in heroic conflicts give winning intelligence, and valour unimpaired, unsurpassed.

(19) Prayer for conquering might

इन्द्र पृत्सु कासु चिन् नृम्णं तनूषु धेहिनः ।
सत्राजिद् उग्र पौंस्यम् ॥ साम. १३१.

' O Indra ! in each fight and battle
give to our bodies manly strength,
O Powerful Lord, give ever conquering might.'
(Samaveda)

(20) The Battle of Life

अश्मन्वती रीयते संरभध्वम्
उत्तिष्ठत प्र तरता सखायः ।
अत्रा जहाम ये असन्नशेवाः
शिवान् वयम् उत्तरेमाभि वाजान् ॥

ऋ. १०।५३।८
य (वा) ३५।१०
अ. १२।२।२६

' The stream, filled with stones, flows on, gather your *strength*;
Stand erect, and cross *over, my friends* '
Here let us leave those who are opposed to goodness, and let us cross over to powers that are beneficent.'

Here ' the stream filled with stones' implies our life filled with difficulties; we must ' stand erect,' i. e. conduct ourselves heroically and get over those

difficulties. There should be no compromise with *powers of evil*.

'Gather your strength' implies that people should combine (सम् signifies it) to fight the difficulties.

For "उत्तिष्ठत", "stand erect," compare—

कृधी न ऊर्ध्वान् चरथाय जीवसे

ऋ. १।३६।१४

"O God! make us erect in our walk and our life"

In the Atharva-veda there is a variation of the text, but this serves to make the meaning clearer. The Atharva veda verse reads

अश्मन्वती रीयते सं रभध्वं
वीरयध्वं प्रतरता सखायः।
अत्रा जहीत ये असन् दुरेवा
अनमीवान् उत्तरेमाभि वाजान्॥

अ. १२।२।२६

'The stream, filled with stones, flows on,
gather your strength, and
Quit you like heroes and cross over,
my friends!
Leave here those who are evil-minded,
Let us cross over to powers that are beneficent!

The changes imply that the Atharva-veda understands "Stand erect" in the Rigveda to mean

"Be heroic," and अशेवा to imply powers of evil, and it paraphrases शिवान् (good) by अनमीवान् (not evil, good).

In a verse following the above, the Atharva-veda further quotes the Rigveda with explanatory words :—

उत्तिष्ठता प्रतरता सखायो—
ऽश्मन्वती नदी स्यन्दत इयम् ।
अत्रा जहीत ये असन्नशिवाः
शिवान् त्स्योनान् उत्तरेमाभि वाजान् ॥
अ. १२।२।२७

'Stand up erect! cross, O friends!
This stony river flows on.
,Leave here those that are opposed to goodness,
Let us cross over to powers that are good
and pleasant.'

[Here the addition of नदी—river—after the Stony (stream)—अश्मन्वती—definitely fixes the meaning of the Rigvedic verse Again for the archaic रीयते—flows—the modern स्यन्दते is used. Similarly, the archaic अशेवाः is substituted by अशिवाः and the meaning of शिवान् is amplified by the addition of स्योनान्—pleasant.]

In the second line of the couplet following the Atharva-veda verse quoted above, there seems to be a paraphrase of the Rigvedic verse :

अतिक्रामन्तो दुरिता पदानि
शतं हिमाः सर्ववीरा मदेम ।
अ. १२।२।२८

'Having crossed over troublous places, may we enjoy (ourselves) with all our heroes for a hundred winters (years)'

(21) March to Victory.

The following is an exhortation, presumably to soldiers, for a march to victory.

प्रेता जयता नर इन्द्रो वः शर्म यच्छतु ॥
उग्रा वः सन्तु बाहवो ऽ नाधृष्या यथासथ ॥

ऋ. १०।१०३।१३, साम. १८६२,
य (वा) १७।४८, अ. ३।१९।७

'Go forward and conquer, ye heroes!
May God give you protection.
Valiant be your arms, so that you
may remain unwounded.'

The occurrence of the verse in each of the four Vedas indicates its representative character. The most characteristic element in Vedic morals is the heroic outlook

Note that though divine protection is sought, the fighters are enjoined to protect themselves from injury by valour. God helps the valiant.

(22) God the Valiant

Vedic morals are found not only in exhortations and prayers but also in the conception of Divinities,

perfect beings, whose qualities indicate ideal virtues. In the following verse God (Indra) is contemplated as strong and valiant

> त्वम् इन्द्र बलाद् अधि सहसो जात ओजसः
> त्वं वृषन् वृषेद् असि ॥
> ऋ १०।१५३।२, सा. १२०, अ. २०।९३।५

' O God ! Thy existence rests on strength,
valour and power.
Thou mighty One ! art strong indeed '

(23) The Leader in Battle

> गोत्राभिदं गोविदं वज्रबाहुं
> जयन्तम् अज्म प्रमृणन्तम् ओजसा ।
> इमं सजाता अनु वीरयध्वम्
> इन्द्रं सखायो अनु सं रभध्वम् ॥
> ऋ. १०।१०३।६, सा. १८५४,
> अ. ६।९७।३, १९।१३।६, य (वा) १७।३६

" Cleaver of fortifications,
Victor of earth, armed with thunder,
who quells an army and with might destroys it,
Follow Him, brothers !
Quit yourselves like heroes ! and friends ! gather ye up strength like him.

[The powerful rhythm of the lines symbolises a heroic idea]

(24) God of Victory

अस्माकम् इन्द्रः समृतेषु ध्वजे—
 ष्वस्माकं या इषवस् ता जयन्तु ।
अस्माकं वीरा उत्तरे भव—
 न्त्वस्माँ उ देवा अवता हवेषु ॥
 ऋ. १०।१०३।११, सा. १८५९,
 अ. १९।१३।११, य (वा) १७।४३

'Ours be Indra when our flags are gathered ;
 May our arrows be victorious ;
May our heroes prevail in battle ,
 Ye Gods ! protect us in the shout of onset'

(25) The Ideal Hero.

In the following verse the divinity is described as an ideal hero.

न वीळवे नमते न स्थिराय
न शर्धते दस्युजूताय स्तवान् ।
अज्रा इन्द्रस्य गिरयश् चिद् ऋष्वा
गम्भीरे चिद् भवति गाधम् अस्मै ॥ ऋ ६।२४।८

" He who is being worshipped does not bend before the strong nor before the firm ;
Nor before the arrogant challenger instigated by the wicked.
For Indra the lofty mountains are as plains ;
For him even in the deeps there is a ford."
The Deity is Indra, who symbolises the heroic ideal.

According to this conception the ideal hero is indomitable and cannot be over-awed or brow-beaten.

Again, his resourcefulness is immense neither tall mountains nor deep streams can block his way. Metaphorically, even where there seems to be no hope, he finds a way out.

The solemnity of the rhythm adds to the power of the idea

(26) Will to Victory

इमा नु कं भुवना सीषधामे—
न्द्रश्च विश्वे च देवा. ॥

ऋ. १०।१५७।१
साम. ४५२, ११७०
अ. २०।६३।१, १२४।४
य. य. २५।४६

We will bring these existing worlds into subjection,
With Indra and all Gods to aid us"

This heroic sentiment is most typical of the Vedas. The verse occurs in all the four Vedas and in two of them, twice

Similar sentiments are expressed in the following—

सुवीर्यस्य पतयः स्याम

ऋ. १०।१३१।६

" May we be lords of hero vigour!"

नृभिर् नृवन्तः स्याम

ऋ. ७।४१।३

" May we be rich in heroes"

न मेम न श्रमिष्ये उग्रस्य सख्ये तव

'O God! having received the friendship
of Thee, the valiant,
We will neither fear nor feel weary.'

(27) Prayer for Divine Virtues.

तेजोऽसि तेजो मयि धेहि ।
वीर्यम् असि वीर्यं मयि धेहि ।
बलम् असि बलं मयि धेह्योजोऽस्योजो मयि धेहि ।
मन्युर् असि मन्युं मयि धेहि ।
सहोऽसि सहो मयि धेहि ॥

य. (वा) १९।९

'Thou art the fiery spirit, give me the fiery spirit,
Thou art manly vigour, give me manly vigour;
Thou art power, give me power,
Thou art energy, give me energy,
Thou art battle fury, give me battle fury,
Thou art conquering might, give me conquering might'

Man approaches God by developing divine qualities in him

(28) The Strong pray to the Strong.

वृषा त्वा वृषणं हुवे
वज्रिन् चित्राभिर् ऊतिभिः ।
वावन्थ हि प्रतिष्टुतिं वृषा हवः ॥

ऋ. ८।६३।२३

" Strong, I call on thee, the Strong,
O Thunderer with thy manifold graces,
Thou hast received this praise. Strong is my call "

Man prays to God, valiant through his own valour.

(29) Heroic Renown.

सामन् नु राये निधिमन्न्वन्नं करामहे सु पुरुध श्रवांसि ।
ता नो विश्वानि जरिता ममत्तु
परातरं सु निर्ऋतिर् जिहीताम् ॥

ऋ. १०।५९।२

" Here is the hymn for wealth and plentiful food;
let us do many deeds of glory.
May the singer rejoice in these our doings.
Let destruction flee to far off places

Here the reference is to deeds of valour which are celebrated by poets in ballads and epics Hence the prayer is for heroic valour.

(30) Epic Glory

जयेम कारे पुरुहूत कारिणो
ऽभि तिष्ठेम दूढ्यः ।
नृभिर् वृत्रं हन्याम शूशुयाम
चावेर् इन्द्र प्र णो धियः ॥

ऋ. ८।२१।१२

'May we be victors, O much invoked,
 (Celebrated) in the songs of poets,
 and challenge the wicked.
May we with heroes smite the power of evil (Vritra)
 and show forth our strength
 O God ! further Thou our intellectual powers'

Ballads and epics celebrated the valour of great heroes. In this verse there is an exhortation for such heroic deeds as would provide a theme for epic poets or ballad singers

[It is interesting to note that the Vedic word Kārı had the same meaning as the Greek word ' poet ' came to have later on viz. maker]

The Path of Action III. Good Life.

(31) "Live and Strive"

आ रोहतायुर् जरसं वृणाना
अनुपूर्वं यतमाना यतिष्ठ ।
इह त्वष्टा सुजनिमा सजोषा
दीर्घम् आयुः करति जीवसे वः ॥

ऋ. १०।१८।६

'Live your full lives and welcome old age,
all of *you striving* one behind the other.
May the Deity, Maker of fair things, be gracious
and lengthen out the days of your existence.'

In Atharva-veda the last line reads:

सर्वम् आयुर् नयतु जीवनाय

अ. १२।२।२४

'And lead your whole lives on to full existence.'

Here the ideal of a life of action is set. Man should always exert himself (यतमाना).

(32) Give up Indolence.

त्रातारो देवा अधि वोचता नो
मा नो निद्रा ईशत मोत जल्पिः ।
वयं सोमस्य विश्वह प्रियासः
सुवीरासो विदथम् आ वदेम ॥

ऋ. ८।४८।१४

'Give us your blessings, O Gods!

'Preservers'

Never may sleep or idle talk control us

But evermore may we, as friends

of the Deity,

and perfect heroes, speak to the synod

Sleep and idle talk cause much waste of valuable time Hence the prayer of votaries of active life to save them from these

(33) Sloth is ungodly

इच्छन्ति देवाः सुन्वन्तं

न स्वप्नाय स्पृहयन्ति ।

यन्ति प्रमादम् अतन्द्राः ॥

ऋ ८।२।१८

'The Gods desire the man who presses

the juice (i e performs the ritual)

They do not like sleep

They, the unsleeping, punish dissoluteness

The following line conveys a similar idea

न ऋते श्रान्तस्य सख्याय देवाः ।

ऋ ४।३३।११

'Gods befriend none but him who has toiled

[For प्रमाद compare the *Bhagavad Gita*

प्रमादालस्यनिद्राभिस्तन् निबध्नाति भारत (१४।८)

'That (तमोगुण – the power of inertia) binds by dissoluteness, indolence and sleep, O scion of Bharata!

Though applying particularly to the performance of ritual, the verse generally applies to life as a whole.

For अतन्द्राः, unsleeping, compare *Bhagavad Gita*

यदि ह्यहं न वर्तेयं जातु कर्मण्यतन्द्रितः (३।२३)

'If I had not engaged in action,
unsleeping'

(34) Divine Wakefulness

अस्वप्नजस् तरणयः सुशेवा
अतन्द्रासो ऽवृका अश्रमिष्ठाः ।
ते पायवः सध्र्यञ्चो निषद्या
ऽग्ने तव नः पान्त्वमूर ॥

ऋ. ४।४।१२

'O effulgent Deity (Agni), who art unerring,
may Thy protecting powers,
that know no slumber, are speedy
and beneficent,
are alert (literally, sleepless), friendly
and unwearied,
may they, combined, take their places
here and preserve (us)'

(35) Honest Labour

अक्षैर् मा दीव्यः कृषिम् इत् कृषस्व
वित्ते रमस्व बहु मन्यमानः ।
तत्र गावः कितव तत्र जाया
तन्मे वि चष्टे सवितायम् अर्यः ॥

ऋ. १०।३४।१३

'Do not play with dice; cultivate thycornland;
Delight in that wealth, thinking highly of it
O Gambler! there is thy cattle and there thy wife,—
So the noble Savita has told me.'

Here the habit of trying to grow rich by gambling is denounced and honest labour and its gains are recommended

Here a man is called upon to work in his field with his cattle and run the household with his wife

(36) Wealth through the path of Law

परि चिन् मर्तो द्रविणं ममन्याद्
ऋतस्य पथा नमसा विवासेत् ।
उत स्वेन क्रतुना सं वदेत
श्रेयांसं दक्षं मनसा जगृभ्यात् ॥

ऋ. १०।३१।२

'Let a man think well on wealth and strive to win it by the path of Law and by worship,
And let him counsel with his own mental insight, and grasp with his mind still greater ability'

A man should obtain wealth by honest and rightful means, and become progressively efficient (दक्ष) by taking thought with himself Rita, eternal moral law, should guide all attempts at growing rich

(37) Unselfishness

मोघम् अन्नं विन्दते अप्रचेताः
सत्यं ब्रवीमि वध इत्स तस्य ।
नार्यमणं पुष्यति नो सखायं
केवलाघो भवति केवलादी ॥

ऋ. १०।११७।६

"The unwise man who offers them neither to Aryaman nor to his fellowmen, obtains foodgrains to little purpose,

I tell you the truth — it is as good as his death

(For) one who feeds all by himself sins all by himself '

The last line literally means ' The lonely (केवल) eater is the lonely sinner

Life must be lived on altruistic principles The *Bhagavad Gita*, proposing to interpret the ancient outlook on life—presumably the Vedic (with reference to Prajapati and creation)—says

भुञ्जते ते त्वघं पापा ये पचन्त्यात्मकारणात् । ३।१३

'Those evil people partake of sin who only cook for themselves.'

This seems to be a paraphrase of the Rigvedic line.

The word अघ (sin, sinful man) is common to both the passages

(38) The Good Path

अग्ने नय सुपथा राये अस्मान्
विश्वानि देव वयुनानि विद्वान् ।
युयोध्य१स्मज्जुहुराणमेनो
भूयिष्ठां ते नमउक्तिं विधेम ॥

ऋ १।१८९।१

य. वा. ३।३५, ७।४३, ४०।१६

Agni! lead us by the right path to well being
Thou, God! who knowest all duties,
Remove from us the sin that makes us go astray
We will offer Thee our fullest adoration

Here God is prayed to for keeping men in the right path, and taking them out of the path of evil and sin

(39) The Right Path

स्वस्ति पन्थाम् अनु चरेम
सूर्याचन्द्रमसाविव ।
पुनर् ददताऽघ्नता
जानता सं गमेमहि ॥ ऋ ५।५१।१५

'We shall follow the path of righteousness like the sun and the moon :

We shall associate again with the liberal, the kind, the knowing.'

"Like the sun and moon" implies the absolute regularity in following the law. The strictness with which the sun and the moon follow the natural law should be observed by man in the case of moral law.

Good life requires keeping company of the good.

(40) Rise through Good Life

परि माग्ने दुश्चरिताद् बाधस्वा
मा सुचरिते भज ।
उद् आयुषा स्वायुषोदस्थाम्
अमृताँ २ ऽ अनु ॥

यजु (वा) ४।२८

'Prevent me, O Agni ! from evil conduct,
make me a sharer in good conduct
I have risen up with life, have risen up with good life,
following the immortals '

Goodness is divine, to follow gods is also to tread in the path of goodness.

(41) Pursuit of Goodness

भद्रं कर्णेभिः शृणुयाम देवा
भद्रं पश्येमाक्षभिर् यजत्राः
स्थिरैर् अङ्गैर् तुष्टुवांसस् तनूभिर्
व्यशेम देवहितं यद् आयुः ॥

ऋ. १।८९।८

' May we listen, O Gods! to
what is good with our ears,
and see, O Holy Ones! what
is good with our eyes,
with firm limbs and bodies,
offering praise-songs to you,
may we enjoy the term
of life allotted by Gods

It is not enough that we should live long, but should also live well

(42) Good-will

यज्जाग्रतो दूरम् उदैति दैवं
तद् उ सुप्तस्य तथैवैति ।
दूरङ्गमं ज्योतिषां ज्योतिरेकं
तन्मे मनः शिवसंकल्पम् अस्तु ॥

य. (वा.) ३४।१

'The divine (subtle) force that goes far away from
the waking person, and that goes likewise from
the sleeping,
the one light of lights, far moving,—
may that mind of mine will what is good.'

The foundation of good action is good will in the mind.

(43) Good-will

यत् प्रज्ञानम् उत चेतो धृतिश्च
यज्ज्योतिरन्तर् अमृतम् प्रजासु ।
यस्मान्न ऋते किञ्चन कर्म क्रियते
तन्मे मनः शिवसकल्पम् अस्तु ॥
य. (वा.) ३४।३

'That which is the source of high knowledge, and
is the intellect and the power of memory,
that which is the deathless flame within
living beings,
Without which no action whatever is performed,
may that mind of mine will what is good

The Veda goes to the spring of all action—the mind of man—and desires goodness there If the will that proceeds from the depths of our being be good, then our whole conduct is good

This subtle, psychological approach to moral con-d is rare even in modern times

[Note the Vedic words for goodness—सु (su) good (adjective), स्वस्ति (Swasti), righteousness, blissfulness, भद्र (*bhadra*), good, blissful, शिव (*Siva*), good]

(44) Loyalty to a comrade

यस्तित्याज सचिविदं सखायं
न तस्य वाच्यपि भागो अस्ति ।
यदीं शृणोत्यलकं शृणोति
नहि प्रवेद सुकृतस्य पन्थाम् ॥

ऋ १०।७१।६

"In the case of one who has deserted a wise comrade, there is no grace even in the words (holy words derived from the scripture) uttered by him
And if he listens (to the holy scripture), he listens in vain.
(For) He knows not the path of righteousness"

Religious conformity is of no value without fundamental morality. Loyalty to a comrade is part of elementary morality

(45) What is Religion.

सत्यं बृहद् ऋतम् उग्रं
दीक्षा तपो ब्रह्म यज्ञः पृथिवीं धारयन्ति ।
सा नो भूतस्य भव्यस्य पत्न्युरुं लोकं
पृथिवी नः कृणोतु ॥

अ. १२।१।१

'Truth, great Law that is stern,
consecration, austerity, prayer
and sacrifice (ritual),
these uphold the earth.

May that earth, the mistress of our past and future,
make a wide world for us.'

If, as the *Mahabharata* says[१], what upholds the earth is Dharma (धर्म), then these six, according to the Veda, are Dharma. Of these, the first two—Truth (सत्य) and Order (ऋत) or Eternal Law, are the fundamental principles of moral life [Cf.

ऋतं च सत्यं चाभीद्धात् तपसोऽध्यजायत

ऋ. १०।१९०।१

From perfect austerity were born
Eternal Law and Truth (in the beginning of creation)]; *consecration* (दीक्षा) and *austerity* (तपः) are the foundation of personal character [Cf Yajur Veda व्रतेन दीक्षाम् आप्नोति । य. (वा) १९।३० 'By self dedication (*vrata*) one receives consecration'] and prayer (ब्रह्म, meaning words of prayer, also scripture and scriptural knowledge) and sacrifice (यज्ञ, ritual) make religion in relation to the Divinity.

'That Earth [सा पृथिवी] ' means the Earth so upheld by Truth etc. So the Vedas accept the earth and

material existence to the fullest extent but subject to the fundamental moral and spiritual laws Here is the difference between the positive and 'this worldly' (ऐहिक) and active (attached to कर्म) outlook of the *Vedas* and the exclusively ascetic, negative and inactive (seeking नैष्कर्म्य) attitude of cults like Buddhism, and the other worldly attitude of certain devotional cults that became very influential in later times

(46) God is Truth

सत्यम् इद् वा उ तं वयम्
इन्द्रं स्तवाम नानृतम् ॥

ऋ ८।६२।१२

'Let us extol this Indra who is truth and not untruth' or

Cf 'सविता सत्यधर्मा' (अ. १।२४।१) 'God has truth as the law of His being

(47) Gods represent Truth

युवां देवास् त्रय एकादशास
सत्याः सत्यस्य ददृशे पुरस्तात् ॥

ऋ ८।५७।२

'O Asvins ! The three and thirty (Deities) that are Truths,
saw you two in front of Truth

(48) Prayer from Truthful Life

ऋतवाकेन सत्येन श्रद्धया तपसा सुत
इन्द्रायेन्दो परि स्रव ।

ऋ ९।११३।२

'O Indu (libation)! *flow towards Indra,*
pressed with words of Law, with Truth,
with Reverence and with pure life (austerity')

(49) Truth in Speech and Action

ऋतं वदन् ऋतद्युम्न
सत्यं वदन् सत्यकर्मन् ।
श्रद्धां वदन् सोम राजन्
धात्रा सोमो परिष्कृत
इन्द्रायेन्दो परि स्रव ॥

ऋ. ९।११३।४

'Declaring Eternal Law, splendid by eternal Law,
Speaking truth and truthful in action,
Speaking reverence, O King Soma!
O Soma! Thou art adorned by the Maker.
O Indu! flow towards Indra.'

'Soma' represents the libation offered to God. The libation must be preceded by a life that is truthful in word and deed, and reverent, and controlled by L? (the fundamental moral principle).

श्रद्धा (*Sraddha*) reverence, faith, joined to truth and law, produces the higher spiritual quality in man.

(50) Straightforwardness of Mind

ऋत शसन्त ऋजु दीध्याना
दिवस् पुत्रासो असुरस्य वीरा. ।
विप्र पदम् अङ्गिरसो दधाना
) यज्ञस्य धाम प्रथम मनन्त ॥

ऋ. १०।६७।२

'Praising the Eternel Law, thinking straight (aright),
Sons of Heavens, sons of Light,
Angirasas held the rank of sages
and first observed the statute
of sacrifice'

Angirasas, the great Vedic sages, qualified as sages and priests (who could perform rituals) by the twofold process of attachment to the fundamental moral Law and thinking in a straight and truthful manner.

For ऋजु, straight, compare the Yajurveda prayer

अञ्जसा सत्यम् उपगेष १९

य. (वा) ५।५

"May I go straight to truth"

[The *Bhagavad Gita* mentions आर्जवम्, substantive form of ऋजु—straightforwardness— as a divine quality

Ch. 16 1] and as a means of self culture (ch. 17, 14)] The term implies intellectual honesty.

(51) Gods, the Protectors of Eternal Law.

ता वां विश्वस्य गोपा
देवा देवेषु यज्ञिया
ऋतावाना यजसे पूतदक्षसा ॥

ऋ ८।२५।१

'I worship you who guard this all,
Gods, holiest among the Gods,
Upholders of the Eternal Law,
whose power is sanctified'
[The Deities are Mitra and Varuna]

These Gods specially uphold the Eternal Law. Also compare —

ऋतस्य मा प्रदिशो वर्धयन्ति

ऋ ८।१००।४ (See No 133 above)

'The Eternal Law's commandments make me (i. e. Indra) mighty'

God has been identified with ऋत—Eternal Law, just as He has been identified with सत्य—Truth. See ऋ. ४।५०।५ [No 117 above]

[ऋत, Eternal Order, came to be known as Dharma (धर्म) in later times, sign the funda-

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विप्र पदम् अङ्गिरसो दधाना
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[ऋत, Eternal Order, came to be known as Dharma (धर्म) *in later times, signifying the funda-*

mental principles of life which must be accepted for one's conduct, whether one believes in the divinity or not. It is in respect of this attitude that there is no break with Vedic tradition in Buddhism, Jainism and similar non-conformist cults in India].

(52) Beauty lies in Eternal Law

ऋतस्य दृह्ळा धरुणानि सन्ति
पुरूणि चन्द्रा वपुषे वपूंषि ।
ऋतेन दीर्घमिषणन्त पृक्ष
ऋतेन गाव ऋतम् आ विवेशुः ॥

ऋ ४।२३।९

Firm seated are Eternal Law's foundations,
in its lovely form are many beauties
By Eternal Law they give us long—lasting nurture;
by Eternal Law, have cattle entered the law.

The Eternal Law that produces cosmic order also produces the order or symmetry that underlies beauty. Hence Gods (Cosmic Powers) that are upholders of Eternal Law are all beautiful Man and the world of matter participate in good, beautiful, orderly life by the power of the Eternal Law

(53) Happiness through attachment to Law

To the man who lives according to Law the earth is full of sweetness, and he seeks to make a heaven of the earth.

मधु वाता ऋतायते
मधु क्षरन्ति सिन्धवः ।
माध्वीर् नः सन्त्वोषधीः ॥ ६ ॥
मधु नक्तम् उतोषसो
मधुमत् पार्थिवं रजः ।
मधु द्यौर् अस्तु नः पिता ॥ ७ ॥
मधुमान् नो वनस्पतिर्
मधुमाँ अस्तु सूर्यः ।
माध्वीर् गावो भवन्तु नः ॥ ८ ॥

ऋ. १।९०

" For one who lives
according to Eternal Law,
the winds are *full of* sweetness,
the rivers pour sweets,
so may plants be
full of sweetness for us (6)
" Sweet be the night and *sweet the* dawns
Sweet the dust of the Earth,
Sweet be our Father Heaven to us (7)
" May the tall *tree* be *full* of sweets for us,
and full of sweetness the sun;
May the kine be *full* of *sweetness* for us ' (8)

This is Vedic " paganism "—the joy in the earth, but a joy consecrated under the control of Eternal (moral) Law (ऋत).

The Path of Action IV—Domestic Life.

Domestic Life (गार्हपत्य or गृहस्थाश्रम) occupies a central place in life according to the Vedas It is established on love and marriage, the conjugal bond and the family ties

(54) The Adventurous Lover

यास्ते पूषन्नावो अन्तः समुद्रे
हिरण्ययीरन्तरिक्षे चरन्ति ।
ताभिर्यासि दूत्यां सूर्यस्य
कामेन कृत श्रव इच्छमानः ॥३॥
पूषा सुबन्धुर्दिव आ पृथिव्या
इळस्पतिर्मघवा दस्मवर्चा. ।
य देवासो अददुः सूर्यायै
कामेन कृत तवस स्वञ्चम् ॥४॥

ऋ ६।५८।४

'O Pushan! thy golden ships travel to the end of the ocean, in the air's mid region,
With those thou goest on an embassy to Surya impelled by love, desirous of glory (3)
Pushan, the good friend of sky and earth Lord of grace, liberal, of wondrous lustre,
Him, the love—impelled, swift moving and strong, the Deities gave to Suryā (4)

The natural phenomenon of the golden light of morning is transformed into the lovely allegory of the journey of Pushan in a golden boat across the ocean into the sky, impelled by his love of the beautiful daughter of Surya—Suryā—and desirous of winning glory to prove his claim to her hand. The gods find him worthy of her and give him to her (in marriage).

Note the earliest interpretation of the romantic ideal of love : a beautiful and heroic youth and a beautiful and noble lady whom he wins by love and the demonstration of valour in a brave adventure across the ocean and the sky.

Note the Aryan way of taking a wife . the bridegroom approaches the father for his consent.

It may also be pointed out that here the bridegroom is said to be "given to" to bride a point that establishes the dignified position of the woman

(55) Marriage.

The suryā marriage which has served as the symbolical marriage ritual for Aryas for thousands of years keeps up the poetic idea of this conception (Rigveda : X. 85-86).

The romantic conception of the love is maintained by the mutualness of the love.

सूर्यां यत् पत्ये शंसन्तीं मनसा सविताददात् ॥

ऋ. १०।८५।९

'Savita gave Suryā to the bridegroom whom she admired with her heart.'

[Here Suryā is said 'to be given' to the bridegroom. This compared to the verse quoted above implies equality of the parties in marriage].

The following is the description of the bridal 'procession.'

रैभ्यासीद् अनुदेयी नाराशंसी न्योचनी ।
सूर्याया भद्रमिद् वासो गाथयैति परिष्कृतम् ॥
चित्तिरा उपबर्हणं चक्षुरा अभ्यञ्जनम् ।
द्यौर्भूमिः कोश आसीद् यद् अयात् सूर्या पतिम् ॥
ऋ १०।८५।६-७

'The Raibhi metre was her bridal friend, the
Narasamsi hymn one who took her home,
Lovely was Suryā's robe,
decorated by the gāthā song.
'Thought was *the pillow of her couch*,
sight was the unguent of her eyes
Her jewellery was sky and earth
when Suryā went to her husband:

The abstract analogies for concrete ideas indicate the extremely subtle nature of the thought.

[Those who are accustomed to calling Rigvedic poetry primitive should ponder over such passages which demonstrate a highly sophisticated stage of culture].

(56) The Marriage Vow

गृभ्णामि ते सौभगत्वाय हस्तं
मया पत्या जरदष्टिर् यथासः ।
भगो अर्यमा सविता पुरंधिर्
मह्यं त्वादुर् गार्हपत्याय देवाः ॥

ऋ. १०।८५।३६

" I take thy hand (in mine) *for good* fortune,
that thou mayest live to old age with me
thy husband ,

Gods, Bhaga, Aryama, Savita, *Purandhi*,
have given thee to me to be the mistress of
my home "

This marriage vow has united couples in India for thousands of years " Being mistress of a home "—गार्हपत्य—came to imply the living of the ideal domestic life—गृहस्थाश्रम.

(57) The Wife's Place in her New Home

पूषा त्वेतो नयतु हस्तगृह्या
अश्विना त्वा प्र वहतां रथेन ।
गृहान् गच्छ गृहपत्नी यथासो
वशिनी त्वं विदथम् आ वदासि ॥

ऋ. १०।८५।२६

"Let Pushan take thy hand and conduct thee hence,
May the two Aswins carry thee in their car.
Go to thy house so that thou mayest be the household's mistress ;
A ruler (of the household), thou wilt address the assembly."

The wife's place in the household is an exalted one.

(58) Queen of the Home

सम्राज्ञी श्वशुरे भव
सम्राज्ञी श्वश्र्वां भव ।
ननान्दरि सम्राज्ञी भव
सम्राज्ञी अधि देवृषु ॥

ऋ. १०।८५।४६

" Be an empress over thy father-in law,
an empress over thy mother-in-law ;
An empress over thy sister in law,
and an empress over thy brothers in-law."

(59) Conjugal Unity

समञ्जन्तु विश्वे देवाः
सम् आपो हृदयानि नौ ।
सं मातरिश्वा सं धाता
समु देष्ट्री दधातु नौ ।

ऋ. १०।८५।४७

" May the Divine Powers, and the Apas unite our hearts,
May the Deities
(Matarishwa, Dhata, Deshtri)
bind us close."

In the Atharva-Veda which reproduces the Rigvedic verses, there are additions including the following prayer for the married couple :

इहेमाविन्द्र संनुद
चक्रवाकेव दंपती ।

अ. १४।२।६४

" Join this couple, O Indra !
like the chakravaka and his mate,"

It is to be noted that the love between husband and wife is expected to be mutual. The loving husband approaches the loving wife. (उशतीर् उशन्तः ।

ऋ १०।८५।३७)

(60) Joint Performance of Ritual

या दंपती समनसा
सुनुत आ च धावतः ।
देवासो नित्ययाशिरा ॥

ऋ. ८।३१।५

" O Gods ! with constant offerings
husband and wife will with one accord press out and wash the Soma juice (the libation to the Divinity)."

(61) Joint-Life.

The Veda delights in the happy family in which husband and wife, blessed with sons and daughters, live in mutual concord and enjoy longlife and prosperity

पुत्रिणा ता कुमारिणा
विश्वम् आयुर् व्यश्नुतः ।
उभा हिरण्यपेशसा ॥

ऋ. ८।३१।८

" With sons and daughters by their side
The two enjoy the full span of life,
both decorated with ornaments of gold."

(62) The Loving Whisper.

While describing the action of the bow, the lovers' whisper is referred to

वक्ष्यन्तीवेदा गनीगन्ति कर्णं
प्रियं सखाय परिषस्वजाना ।
योषेव शिङ्क्ते वितताधि धन्वञ्
ज्या इयं समने पारयन्ती ॥

ऋ. ६।७५।३

'As if desirous of speaking, she presses close to the ear,
holding her beloved friend in her embraces;
Strained on the bow, she whispers like a woman,—
This Bow string that preserves (the warrior) in the battle.'

Here the ideas of the heroism of the Kshatriya and the romanticism of the conjugal (Grihastha) life are inter mingled. The Vedas give full expression to both. [*It is interesting to note* that ascetic cults like Buddhism opposed both these ideals.]

(63) Chastity is Godly

The Rigveda gives love and matrimony the most exalted status when it compares the Divinity to the beloved wife.

अनवद्या पतिजुष्टेव नारी ऋ. १।३।३

'Like the spotless wife beloved of her husband'

This also implies that chastity in the woman is a godly quality

(64) Family Concord

The Atharva Veda sets a fine ideal of family concord

सहृदय सामनस्यम् आविद्वेष कृणोमि वः ।
अन्यो अन्यम् आभि हर्यत वत्स जातम् इवाघ्न्या ॥१॥
अनुव्रतः पितुः पुत्रो मात्रा भवतु समनाः ।
जाया पत्ये मधुमतीं वाच वदतु शन्तिवाम् ॥२॥
मा भ्राता भ्रातरं द्विक्षन् मा स्वसारम् उत स्वसा
सम्यञ्चः सव्रता भूत्वा वाच वदत भद्रया ॥३॥

अ. ३।३०

'*I will make you of one heart, of one mind, and free from hate.*

Love one another as the cow loves the calf she has borne. (1)

Let the son be loyal to the father,
and of one mind with the mother;

Let the wife speak sweet and gentle words to the husband: (2)

Let not brother hate brother,
sister hate sister,

unanimous, united in purpose,
speak you words with friendliness.' (3)

(65) Family Unity.

The ideal of unity is further interpreted in the hymn

समानी प्रपा सह वोऽन्नभागः
समाने योक्त्रे सह वो युनज्मि ।
सम्यञ्चो ऽग्निं सपर्यतारा नाभिम् इवाभितः ॥

'Let your drink be the same, your food be common,
I bind you together with one common bond
United, gather round the (sacrificial) fire
as the spokes of a chariot-wheel gather round the nave.'

The family offered its daily prayer by congregating round the sacrificial fire in which libations of clarified butter were jointly thrown. This was the agni hotra.

(66) The Home

The Veda *considers the home as a sort of heaven* on earth

भोजायाश्व सं मृजन्त्याशुं
भोजायास्ते कन्या ३ शुम्भमाना ।
भोजस्येद पुष्करिणीव वेश्म
परिष्कृतं देवमानेव चित्रम् ॥

ऋ. १०।१०७।१०

' They adorn the swift steed for the liberal giver, for the liberal giver the resplendent bride waits,

His is the home like the lotus-lake, decorated, and wonderful as the divine mansion '

The promises for the bountiful donor indicate the importance of the home and the care with which it was *beautified*

(67) Sweet Home

In the following lines the poet wishes his going out of and return to home to be sweet

मधुमन् मे परायण
मधुमत् पुनरायनम् ।
ता नो देवा देवतया
युत्र मधुमतस् कृतम् ॥

ऋ १०।२४।६

'Sweet be my going forth, and sweet my return (home)
So Ye Twain Gods (Asvins)' enrich us with sweetness through your divinity'

(68) **Home remembered on sojourn**

येषाम् अध्येति प्रवसन्
येषु सौमनसो बहु ।
गृहान् उपह्वयामहे
ते नो जानन्तु जानत ॥

च (वा) ३।४२

'The home on which man, sojourning, contemplates, in which love abounds,
We call it to welcome us, may it know us who know it

The idea of the sojourning man (प्रवसन्) contemplating on home touches a universal chord and is highly poetic We also find great beauty in the simple statement that there is much (बहु) love (सौमनस) in the home

(69) **The Full Man**

सोमो धेनुं सोमो अर्वन्तम् आशुं
सोमो वीरं कर्मण्यं ददाति ।
सादन्यं विदथ्यं सभेयं
पितृश्रवणं यो ददाशद् अस्मै ॥

ऋ १।९१।२०

'To him who makes the offering, the Deity (Soma) gives the milch cow, He gives the fleet steed,

And He gives the hero son,
who is fit for work,

fit for home, fit for the (social) assembly, fit for the (political) council,

and a glory to his father

Here the ideal son desired by the father is described He is *Karmanya* (कर्मण्य), capable of *Karma* or work, *Sadanya* (सादन्य), fit for *Sadan*, the household, capable of discharging domestic responsibilities, *Vidathya* (विदथ्य) fit for *vidatha*, the assembly—a gathering of the people which is social and religious in nature, hence capable of discharging his duties to the community or social group of which he is a member and *Sabheya* (सभेय), fit for *sabhā*, the political body guiding the king in administration, conduct of warfare etc hence, fit to perform political duties to his state Finally he brings glory to his father by his character and achievements and so he is *pitrisravana* (पितृश्रवण).

Hence the ideal citizen has primarily to be a man capable of work and then he must do his duties in widening spheres of action — to his household, his society and his state

The Path of Action V—Social Order.

(70) Four Limbs of Society

If human society is imagined to be a mighty Person (पुरुष), then his important limbs should represent the important orders of society

ब्राह्मणोऽस्य मुखम् आसीद्
बाहू राजन्य: कृत: ।
ऊरू तद् अस्य यद् वैश्य:
पद्भ्यां शूद्रो अजायत ॥

ऋ. १०।९०।१२

"The man of knowledge (*Brahmana*) was his mouth,
his arms were made the ruling man (*rajanya*),
His thighs were that which is the man of industry (*Vaishya*),
out of his feet was born the working man (*Śudra*)

Society should consist of men following four broad types of pursuits—culture, politics, industry and labour.

[The Vedas think of types of work not *castes* i. e fixed hereditary groups of men]

It is to be noted that the Vedas recognise the dignity of labour by making the labourer an essential part of Purusha, the Divine Person,

(71) Prayer for a powerful state

Society becomes powerful when each of these forces fully develops.

आ ब्रह्मन्
ब्राह्मणो ब्रह्मवर्चसी जायताम्
आ राष्ट्रे राजन्यः शूर इषव्योऽतिव्याधी
महारथो जायतां
दोग्ध्री धेनुर् वोढानड्वान्
आशुः सप्तिः
पुरन्धिर् योषा
जिष्णू रथेष्ठाः सभेयो युवास्य
यजमानस्य वीरो जायतां
निकामे निकामे नः पर्जन्यो वर्षतु
फलवत्यो नऽओषधयः पच्यन्तां
योगक्षेमो नः कल्पताम् ॥

य (वा) २२।२२

" O Brahman, May there be born in this kingdom the wise man (Brahman) illustrious for spiritual knowledge ,

may there be born the ruling man (rajanya), heroic, skilful archer, piercing with shafts, mighty warrior ,

the cow giving abundant milk, the ox good at carrying, the swift horse ,

[and] the highly intellectual woman.

May there be born to the sacrificer a youthful son, willing victory, best of chariot fighters, worthy of the assembly.

May rain fall as we desire. May our fruit—bearing plants ripen May our war and peace prosper.

(72) Source of Social Vitality.

ब्रह्म जिन्वतम् उत जिन्वतं धियः

ऋ. ८।३५।१६

क्षत्रं जिन्वतम् उत जिन्वतं नॄन्

ऋ. ८।३५।१७

धेनूर् जिन्वतम् उत जिन्वतं विशः

ऋ. ८।३५।१८

" Animate the power of knowledge
and strengthen the intellect,
Animate the fighting power
and strengthen the heroes ;
Animate the milch cow
and strengthen the masses of people "

The Deities are Aswins Each of these prayers is followed by the refrain—

हतं रक्षांसि सेधतम् अमीवाः

' Slay the lawless enemies (Rakshasas)
and drive away disease '

These verses indicate the original conception of the three *varnas*—Brahmana, Kshatriya and Vaishya'

representing, respectively, the cultural, political and economic interests of society.

(73) Prayer for Threefold Power

In the following the same individual prays for the powers of Brahmana, Kshatriya and Vaishya, all in one

कुविन् मा गोपां करसे जनस्य
कुविद् राजानं मघवन् ऋजीषिन्
कुविन् म ऋषिं पपिवांस सुतस्य
कुविन् मे वस्वो अमृतस्य शिक्षाः ॥

ऋ. ३।४३।५

" Wilt Thou make me guardian of the people ?
Wilt Thou make me, impetuous Maghavan! their ruler ?
Wilt Thou make me a Rishi (sage) who drinks Soma juice ?
Wilt Thou make me master of wealth everlasting ? "

(74) Prayer for All Classes of Society

रुच नो धेहि ब्राह्मणेषु
रुच ँ राजसु नस्कृधि ।
रुच विश्येषु शूद्रेषु
मयि धेहि रुचा रोचम् ॥

य. १८।४८

" Give lustre to our men of holy lore (Brahmanas), *give lustre to our kingly men (Kshatriyas),* give lustre to commoners (Vaishyas), and working men (Śudras), give, through lustre, lustre to me."

Here lustre or intellectual and spiritual brilliance is sought for all sections of the people

(75) Guardians of Social Law

ऋतावाना नि षेदतुः
साम्राज्याय सुक्रतू
धृतव्रता क्षत्रिया
क्षत्रम् आशतुः ॥ ऋ. ८।२५।८

" Upholders of Eternal Law,
exceedingly powerful,
They have set themselves down
for sovereignty
Valiant heroes, whose laws
stand fast,
have obtained the guardianship (of the earth)."

This is spoken of Mitra and Varuna, Guardians of cosmic law, it also applies to social law, of which the earthly king is guardian. Therefore the kingly man—राजन्य—has been *described* as a Kshatriya (क्षत्रिय).

The Yajurveda applies these descriptive terms to the king [य (वा) १०।२७].

Elsewhere the Yajurveda invokes Mitra and Varuna to inspire the king in his task

मित्रः सत्यः वरुणो धर्मपतीनाम् ॥

य (वा) ९।३९

" May Mitra quicken thee (the king) for truth and Varuna for the guardian sway."

(76) ' Swarajya '

प्रेह्यभीहि धृष्णुहि
न ते वज्रो नि यंसते ।
इन्द्र नृम्णं हि ते शवो
हनो वृत्रं जया अपो
ऽर्चन्ननु स्वराज्यम् ॥

ऋ. १।८०।३

" Go forward, be bold,
and fight!
Thy thunderbolt cannot
be subdued.
Indra! manliness is
thy strength,
Strike the power of evil,
win the waters,
acclaiming thy own
royal sway."

This address to the Deity, the ideal Hero, also applies to the hero-man. He should make manliness

his strength, he should bravely fight evil, win what is good (symbolised by 'waters') and declare 'swarajya'—his own self rule on the earth.

Indra's thunderbolt symbolises the power coming out of justice (ऋत) and truth (सत्य).

(77) The King's task

स्वराड् असि सपत्नहा
सम्राड् असि अभिमातिहा
जनराड् असि रक्षोहा
सर्वराड् असि अमित्रहा ॥

य (वा) ५।२४

'Self—ruler art thou,
conquering foes,
ruler forever art
thou, conquering aggressors,
Ruler of the people art thou,
destroyer of wicked powers,
all ruler art thou,
destroyer of enemies'

The king's essential task is to fight the evil forces of the world and enforce the law of justice. The following aim of kingship is described is Yajurveda—

रक्षसां त्वा वधाय

य (वा) १।३६

'We enjoin thee to destroy wicked power (Rak-

In this respect the king shares the function of Indra, the slayer of Vritra (Symbolic Power of evil):

इन्द्रस्य वार्त्रघ्नम् असि

य. (वा.) १०।८

" Thou art Indra's Vritra—slaying weapon (referring to the new king's bow) "

त्वया इयं वृत्रं वधेत्

य १०।८

" With thee (the bow) may this man (i. e. the king) kill " Vritra (the Power of evil).

The Kshatriyas, guardians of the people, are champions of right against wrong Their daily task is to fight and subdue the wicked

अभिष्याम रक्षस.

ऋ. १०।१३२।२

" May we subdue the wicked "

रण कृधि रणकृत् सत्यशुष्मा

ऋ. १०।११२।१०

" Fight, warrior, strong in truth "

मा नो दुःशंस ईशता ऋ १०।२५।७

" Let not the wicked rule us

(78) The Dasyu—Power of Lawlessness.

The power of wickedness is called दस्यु in the Vedas, " God is a destroyer of the Dasyu "

स वज्रभृद् दस्युहा भीम उग्र.

ऋ. १।१००।१२

" He is the holder of the thunderbolt, destroyer of the Dasyu (wicked), fearful and mighty

He is दस्युहन्तम—(ऋ. १०।१७०।२)—the Supreme Destroyer of the Dasyu."

The " Arya " is one who lives by Truth and Law; the Dasyu is the lawless inhuman being :

अकर्मा दस्युर् अभि नो अमन्तुर्
अन्यव्रतो अमानुषः ।
त्व तस्यामित्रहन् वधर्
दासस्य दम्भय ॥ ऋ १०।२२।८

The Evil doing Dasyu is around us, senseless, keeping false laws, inhuman :

O slayer of the foe, baffle the weapon of the Dasa."

Elsewhere the Dasyu is called

अन्यव्रतम् अमानुषम्
अयज्वानम् अदेवयुम् ऋ. ८।७०।११

"Followers of evil laws, inhuman, riteless, godless."

(79) " **Subdue malignity.**"

The Kshatriya ideal requires uncompromising and unrelenting opposition to the powers of evil :

अभिवृत्य सपत्नान्
अभि या नो अरातयः ।
अभि पृतन्यन्तं तिष्ठ
अभि यो न इरस्यति ॥ ऋ. १०।१७४।२

Subduing our antagonists, subduing all malignities,
Withstand the man who menaces,
Withstand the man who teases us."

(80) "War fury"

The power of fighting evil has been called मन्यु, Wrath, in the Vedas. The following are addressed to Manyu.

अग्निरिव मन्यो त्विषितः सहस्व
सेनानीर्नः सहुरे हूत एधि ।
हत्वाय शत्रून् वि भजस्व वेद
ओजो मिमानो विमृधो नुदस्व ॥

ऋ. १०।८४।२

"Flashing like fire, O conquering Wrath!
be Thou invoked, O Victor! as our army's leader!
Slay our enemies, *divide their possessions*,
Showing forth thy valour, scatter those who hate us."

(81) Aryanise the World

इन्द्र वर्धन्तो अप्तुरः
कृण्वन्तो विश्वम् आर्यम्
अपघ्नन्तो अराव्णः ॥

ऋ. ९।६३।५

"May the active be glorifying God,
Aryanising all,
driving away the lawless."

To aryanise people is to bring them under the sway of moral law The lawless, who are too inhuman for being aryan sed or civilised, should be expelled

The Veda is uncomprom sing in its opposition to evil

(82) The Righteous War

The warrior fighting for a righteous cause is blessed in the following terms

मर्माणि ते वर्मणा छादयामि
सोमस्त्वा राजामृतेनानु वस्ताम् ।
उरोर् वरीयो वरुणस् ते कृणोतु
जयन्त त्वानु देवा मदन्तु ॥

ऋ. ६।७५।१८
साम. १८७०
शु. य. १७।४९
अ. ७।११८।१

" Thy vital parts I cover with the coat of mail,
May King Soma clothe thee in immortality,
May Varuna make thee more than sufficient and in thy triumph may the Gods rejoice "

The Gods will rejoice only in the triumph of a good cause Hence the last portion of the prayer implies that the warrior should *fight for a right cause*

(83) Oppose the destroyer even if a kinsman

The agent of evil and our enemy must be opposed and conquered, whether he is our own by race or a

foreigner. Hence the righteous war is not what is known as "religious war," i. e. war against followers of other religions; the righteous war can be waged against our own kith and kin.

यो नः स्वो अरणो
यश्च निष्ट्यो जिघांसति ।
देवास् तं सर्वे धूर्वन्तु
ब्रह्म वर्म ममान्तरम् ॥

ऋ. ६।७५।१९
सा. १८७२

"Whatever enemy wants to kill us,
Whether he is a stranger or one of us,
May All Gods discomfit him
My prayer is the coat of mail within me."
The Samaveda adds a half-line after the last

शर्म वर्म ममान्तरम्

[And] "Divine Grace is the coat of mail within me."

The problem of Arjuna in the Bhagavad Gita, whether a kinsman, ranged against him in the battle-field, should be fought against, had been solved in the Veda. It is, however, interesting to find the Bhagavad Gita fully supporting the Vedic attitude. Shri Krishna chastises the weak sentimentality of Arjuna as something un-Aryan, अनार्य, presumably upholding the Vedic

(85) The King and the People

अस्मे वोऽअस्त्विन्द्रियम्
अस्मे नृम्णम् उत क्रतुर्
अस्मे वर्चांꣳसि सन्तु वः ।
नमो मात्रे पृथिव्यै
नमो मात्रे पृथिव्या ऽइयं ते राड्
यन्तासि यमनो ध्रुवोऽसि धरुणः ।
कृष्यै त्वा क्षेमाय त्वा रय्यै त्वा पोषाय त्वा ॥

य. ९।२२

" In us may there be your power,
in us your valour, your wisdom,
in us be your mental splendour.
Obeisance to Mother Earth,
Obeisance to Mother Earth !
This is thy sovereignty.
Thou art the controller, ruler,
Thou art steady, firm.
Thee for culture of the land,
Thee for peace, thee for wealth,
Thee for nurture "

The king is addressed here by the people consecrating him It is in them that his power, vigour, wisdom and light lie Mother earth signifies the country in particular.

The following verse deals with the function of the leaders of society in relation to the state.

(86) The well—being of all the people

मनो मे तर्पयत वाचं मे तर्पयत
चक्षुर्मे तर्पयत श्रोत्रं मे तर्पयत ।
आत्मानं मे तर्पयत प्रजां मे तर्पयत
पशून् मे तर्पयत गणान् मे तर्पयत
गणा मे मा वितृषन् ॥

य (वा) ६।३१

" Let my mind be contented,
let my speech be contented,
let my eye be contented,
let my ear be contented.
Let myself be contented,
let my progeny be contented,
let my herds be contented,
let my people be contented
Let not my people thirst "

This is a prayer of a King

The king defends and unites the people

अथा नऽइन्द्रऽइद् विशो ऽसपत्नाः समनसस्करत् ॥

य (वा) ७।२५

" So now may Indra verily make the people free from foes, and all of one mind "

(87) The Watchmen of the State

वाजस्येमं प्रसवः सुषुवेऽग्रे सोमं
राजानम् ओषधीष्वप्सु ।
ता ऽस्मभ्यं मधुमतीर् भवन्तु
वयं राष्ट्रे जागृयाम पुरोहिताः स्वाहा ॥

य. ९।२३

" O Agni, thus furtherance of strength led forward King Soma in the plants and waters,

Let these be full of sweetness for us

We, in the state, being stationed in the front, shall remain wakeful "

The leaders of Society will keep constant vigilance *over the State, being placed in the front rank of citizens.* The king is the ruler, but it should be enlightened rule guided by the leaders of the people.

[These verses precede the Rajasuya sacrifice]

(88) Subjects of a greater King

विश ऽएष वो ऽमी राजा
सोमो ऽस्माकं ब्राह्मणानां राजा ॥

य (वा) ९।४०

" O people ! This is your King.

Soma is King over us, followers of divine knowledge (Brahmanas)."

This is part of a prayer in the *Rajasuya Yajna.*

The spiritual men recognised no earthly King. their only King was God.

The word 'Brahmana' does not imply a caste in the Vedas. Brahmanas, upholders of sacred wisdom and performers of sacred rites were generally sages (Rishis). In later times Sanyasis have claimed this privilege of independence of the state and kingly sway.

(89) The Popular Assembly

The Vedas speak of the Sabhā, a people's assembly, as part of the constitution of the State. There are also other popular bodies like the *Vidatha, Samiti, Samana* etc. A good ruler and a good citizen has to be *Sabheya* (सभेय) worthy of taking part in the assembly.

The Rigveda speaks of the importance in Society of the man who carries the day in the assembly.

सर्वे नन्दन्ति यशसागतेन
सभासाहेन सख्या सखायः ।
किल्बिषस्पृत् पितुषणिर् ह्येषाम्
अरं हितो भवति वाजिनाय ॥

ऋ. १०।७१।१०

"All friends rejoice in the friend who comes with glory, having triumphed in the assembly,

He, verily, is their protector from evil, provider of food, fit is he for deeds of vigour."

(90) The Ideal Citizen

सोमो धेनु सोमो अर्वन्तम् आशु
सोमो वीरं कर्मण्यं ददाति ।
सादन्य विदथ्यं सभेयं
पितृश्रवण यो ददाशद् अस्मै ॥

ऋ. १।९१।२०

To him who worships the Deity gives
the milch cow, the fleet steed,
and the heroic man
who is fit for work,

fit for home, fit for the (social) assembly, fit for the (political) council; and a glory to his father.

(91) *Harmony of Wisdom and Valour*

यत्र ब्रह्म च क्षत्रं च सम्यञ्चौ चरतः सह ।
तल्लोकं पुण्यं प्रज्ञेषं यत्र देवाः सहाग्निना ॥

य (वा) २०।२५

"That world I would know where spiritual power (*brahma*) and ruling power (*Kshatra*) move together in harmony,

and where Gods with Agni dwell"

The combination of the ruler and philosopher, of valour and wisdom has been an ideal preached by thinkers of later ages too.

(92) Social Unity

सं गच्छध्वं संवदध्वं सं वो मनांसि जानताम् ।
देवा भागं यथा पूर्वे संजानाना उपासते ॥२॥
समानो मंत्रः समितिः समानी समानं मनः सह चित्तम् एषाम् ।
समानं मन्त्रम् अभि मंत्रये वः समानेन वो हविषा जुहोमि ॥३॥
समानी व आकूतिः समाना हृदयानि वः
समानम् अस्तु वो मनः यथा वः सुसहासति ॥४॥

ऋ. १०।१९१

" Assemble ; speak with one another ,
Let your minds be of one accord.
As ancient god's unanimous enjoy their due portions.
May your aim be common,
your assembly common ,
Common the mind, and the thoughts united.
A common purpose do I lay before you ,
and worship with your common oblation.
Common be your aim, and your hearts united ,
Your mind be one so that all may happily live together."

The Atharva veda supplies a variant of the first line by way of—one may say—explanation :

सं जानीध्वं सं पृच्यध्वम्

अ. ६।६४।१

' Agree and hold together.'

(93) God is common to all

यच्चिद्धि शश्वताम् असीन्द्र साधारणस्त्वम् ।
तं त्वा वय हवामहे ॥

ऋ. ८।६५।७

As, O God! Thou art for ever, the
Common Lord of all alike
As such we invoke thee now."

Also compare—

समानम् इन्द्रम् अवसे हवामहे

ऋ ८।९९।८

"We invoke for our succour Indra who is the common friend of all."

(94) Hate not the Foreigner

अर्यम्यं वरुण मित्र्य वा
सखाय वा सदमिद् भ्रातरं वा ।
वेश वा नित्यं वरुणारणं वा
यत् सीमागस् चकृमा शिश्रथस् तत् ॥

ऋ. ५।८५।७

If, Varuna, we have sinned against the man who loves us, or against a friend,
Or a comrade for ever, or a brother,
Or against a neighbour who is always with us or against a stranger,
From that sin thou release us.'

Here the prayer is for forgiveness, for sins against the stranger as well as the neighbour.

Note also

यः सदेस्यो वरुणो यो विदेश्यः   अ. ४।१६।८

'Varuna who is of our own land, and also of foreign land.'

(95) Vedas for all

The Veda states that its wise words are for all mankind, not to be limited to any group or nationality

यथेमां वाचं कल्याणीम्

आवदानि जनेभ्यः

ब्रह्मराजन्याभ्यां

शूद्राय चार्याय च

स्वाय चारणाय च ।   यजु० २६।२

"So may I speak these blessed words to the people at large

to the Brahmana and the Kshatriya,

to the Shudra and the Vaisya,

to my own people and to the foreigner"

(96) Universal Friendship

Vedic universality requires man to establish friendship with the whole universe with all other beings

मित्रस्य मा चक्षुषा सर्वाणि भूतानि समीक्षन्ताम् ।

मित्रस्याहं चक्षुषा सर्वाणि भूतानि समीक्षे ।

मित्रस्य चक्षुषा समीक्षामहे ॥   यजु. ३६।१८

May all beings look on me with the eye of a friend;
may I look on all beings with the eye of a friend;
may we look on one another with the eye of a friend;

(97) *Freedom from Fear*

Friendship leads to fearlessness and peace and works for universal happiness:

अभयं मित्राद् अभयम् अमित्राद्
अभयं ज्ञाताद् अभयं पुरो यः ।
अभयं नक्तम् अभयं दिवा नः
सर्वा आशा मम मित्रं भवन्तु ॥

अ. १९।१५।६

"May I be fearless of the friend, fearless *of the foe*,
fearless of the known, fearless of the unknown,
May our nights be without fear, our days without fear.
May all the directions be my friends."

(98) The Beautiful Earth

Finally we must accept the earth with its joys and sorrows, its clashes and conflicts and live as its lords:

यस्यां गायन्ति नृत्यन्ति भूम्यां मर्त्या व्यैलबाः ।
युध्यन्ते यस्याम् आक्रन्दो यस्यां वदति दुं-दुभिः ।
सा नो भूमिः प्र णुदतां सपत्नान् असपत्नं
मा पृथिवी कृणोतु ॥ अ. १२।१।४१

May the Earth—the Earth whereon men sing and dance with various noise,

Whereon men meet in battle, and the war-cry rises and the drum resounds,

May she subdue my foemen and make me free from foes.

(99) The free Man on a fine Earth

गिरयस्ते पर्वता हिमवन्तो
ऽरण्यं ते पृथिवि स्योनम् अस्तु
बभ्रुं कृष्णां रोहिणीं विश्वरूपां
ध्रुवां भूमिं पृथिवीम् इन्द्रगुप्ताम् ।
अजीतोऽहतो अक्षतोऽध्यष्ठां पृथिवीम् अहम् ॥

अ. १२।१।११

"O Earth, pleasant be Thy hills and snow-clad mountains and thy wood-lands!

In the Earth—brown, black, ruddy and of all colours—the firm Earth, the Earth protected *by the Deity* (*Indra*),

Upon this Earth I — unconquered, unslain, unwounded, have set my foot."

(100) Earth's Inhabitants

The earth is not for the races of men alone but for other *creatures* also.

त्वज् जातास् त्वयि चरन्ति मर्त्यास्
त्वं बिभर्षि द्विपदस् त्वं चतुष्पदः ।
तवेमे पृथिवि पञ्च मानवा
येभ्यो ज्योतिर् अमृतं मर्त्येभ्य
उद्यन् त्सूर्यो रश्मिभिर् आतनोति ॥

अ. १२।१।१५

Born of Thee, on Thee move mortal creatures,
Thou bearest them — the biped and the quadruped,
Thine, O Earth, are the five races of men, to whom, mortals, Surya (Sun), as he rises, spreads with his rays the light that is immortal."

(101) Earth's Variety

The earth does not belong to a single race, but to different races, speaking different languages.

जन बिभ्रती बहुधा विवाचसं
नानाधर्माणं पृथिवी यथौकसम् ।
सहस्रं धारा द्रविणस्य मे दुहां
ध्रुवेव धेनुर् अनपस्फुरन्ती ॥

अ. १२।१।४५

May the Earth that bears people speaking varied language,

With various religious rites according to the places
of abode
Enrich me with wealth in a thousand streams
Like a milch-cow that never faileth."

This recognition of the variety of language and ritual lies at the bottom of the catholic outlook of the Vedic religion It has aimed at creating unity in variety, and not uniformity That is how different tribes and classes of people, living at different stages of civilisation, including primitive tribes, have developed on their own lines, under the benevolent and uplifting influence of the Vedic religion. The higher they rose, the more thorough was the assimilation into Vedic spiritual, moral and intellectual culture.

(102) Concord with the Universe

द्यौः शान्तिर् अन्तरिक्षँ शान्तिः
पृथिवी शान्तिर् आपः शान्तिर् ओषधयः शान्तिः ।
वनस्पतयः शान्तिर् विश्वे देवाः शान्तिर् ब्रह्म शान्तिः
सर्वँ शान्तिः शान्तिर् एव शान्तिः
सा मा शान्तिर् एधि ॥ य (वा) ३६।१७
अ १९।९।१४

" Peace of sky, peace of mid region, peace of earth,
peace of waters, peace of plants,
Peace of trees, peace of All-Gods, peace of
Brahman, peace of the universe, peace of peace:
May that peace come to me ! "

The Path of Action VI

. Ritual (कर्मकांड)

(103) Four Ways with the Scripture

The Veda speaks of four different ways in which people deal with the Vedic text :

ऋचां त्वः पोषमास्ते पुपुष्वान्
गायत्र त्वो गायति शक्वरीषु ।
ब्रह्मा त्वो वदति जातविद्यां
यज्ञस्य मात्रा वि मिमीत उ त्वः ॥

ऋ. १०|७१|११

' One plies his constant task, reciting the verses ;
One sings the sacred psalm in Sakvari measures,
Another, the master of knowledge, imparts the knowledge of being,
and still another lays down the rules of sacrifice,

Here the four types of men deal with the Veda in four different ways : one recites the poetry, a second sings it, a third speaks of the knowledge contained in it and a fourth arranges a ritual Hence to recite the Veda, to sing it, to realise and propagate the knowledge of it and to perform rituals through it—these were the different activities undertaken by followers of the Vedas. The first type of man has done inestimable service by handing down the Veda by oral transmission throughout

the ages, and the second type has put a new charm into Vedic poetry by setting it into music, it is the third type of man—the man of knowledge who has been engaged in the most important task, viz—that of spreading knowledge The fourth type of man does something that is temporary—the ritual, and that varies from age to age

(104) Blessed Rites

भद्रो नो अग्निराहुतो
भद्रा रातिः सुभग भद्रो अध्वरः ।
भद्रा उत प्रशस्तयः ॥ ऋ. ८।१९।१९
साम. १११, १५५९
य (वा) १५।३८–३९

' Blessed be Agni invoked by us,
Blessed the oblation,
O Gracious One ! may our sacrifice be blessed ,
Blessed be our songs of praise '

The special effect of the ritual is that it creates an atmosphere of holiness and bliss

Mark the grave rhythm of the lines

(105) New Rites

ब्रह्मा कृणोति वरुणो
गातुविद तम् ईमहे ।
व्यूर्णोति हृदा मतिं
नव्यो जायताम् ऋतं ॥
वित्त मे अस्य रोदसी ॥ ऋ १।१०५।१५

" Varuna makes songs of prayer ;
We worship Him who finds the path.
He reveals the hymn in the heart.
Let the rite be born anew.
[O Heaven and Earth know this !] "

(106) ' Improve the Ritual '

That the ritual is a changing thing is stated in the Veda .

त्वं नो अग्ने सनये धनानां
यशसं कारुं कृणुहि स्तवानः ।
ऋध्याम कर्मापसा नवेन
देवैर् द्यावापृथिवी प्रावतं नः ॥ ऋ. १।३१।८

' Thou, O Agni, for the treasuring of riches
make the singer famous—
Thou highly lauded ;
May we improve the rite with new performance.
O Heaven and Earth ! with the Gods, protect us '

' May we improve the rite (कर्म) with new performance '—clearly means that कर्मकांड—the ritual is never permanent; in fact, it is the duty of the worshipper to improve it from time to time.

(107) Right Life a preparation for Religious Rite

Again no ritual is worth one's while unless the person performing it comes spiritually prepared for it—

with a pure body, a pure heart, and a clean life : a life lived according to moral and spiritual law (व्रत) The Dasyu is *avrata*—unholy in life.

ऋतं वदन्नृतद्युम्न
सत्यं वदन् त्सत्यकर्मन् ।
श्रद्धां वदन् त्सोम राजन्
धात्रा सोम परिष्कृत
इन्द्रायेन्दो परि स्रव ॥

ऋ. ९।११३।४

" Declaring the law, splendid by law,
declaring truth, truthful in act,
Declaring reverence, O Soma, King !
By thy creator Thou art decorated
may Indu flow towards Indra "

(108) The Evil-doer unfit for Ritual

प्रत्नान् मानाद् अध्या ये समस्वरन्
छ्लोकयन्त्रासो रभसस्य मन्तवः ।
अपानक्षासो बधिरा अहासत
ऋतस्य पन्था न तरन्ति दुष्कृतः ॥

ऋ. ९।७३।६

" Those that from ancient seats manifested themselves—
the guides of song and counsellors of movement,

From these the eyeless and the deaf have turned aside.

The evil doers travel not the path of Eternal Law'

The guides are literally 'lights' 'The wise sages.' The spiritually blunt ('eyeless,' 'deaf') ignore them. But *for such is not the path of Rita* (ऋत) — the Eternal Law of life, and the Holy Law of worship — yajna (यज्ञ). The sacred rite is not for the spiritually eyeless and deaf or *for the immoral and wicked.* The path of worship is the path of goodness. "Rita" as truth, goodness, justice, must precede "Rita" as *sacrifice*

(109) Keep out the Licentious

न यातव इन्द्र जूजुवुर्नो
न वन्दना शविष्ठ वेद्याभिः ।
स शर्धद् अर्यो विषुणस्य जन्तोर्
मा शिश्नदेवा अपि गुर् ऋतं नः ॥ ऋ ७।२१।५

" No wicked ones, O Indra ! have impelled us,
nor fiends, O Thou most mighty ! with their devices,
May the Noble One subdue the hostile crowd ;
May not the lewd approach our rituals."

(110) *The Man Dear to God*

न तं जिनन्ति बहवो न दभ्रा
उर्वस्मा अदितिः शर्म यंसत् ।
प्रियः सुकृत् प्रिय इन्द्रे मनायुः
प्रियः सुप्रावीः प्रियो अस्य सोमी ॥ ऋ. ४।२५।५

" Neither the many nor the few overcome him ;
Aditi will give spacious shelter to Him ;
Dear is the well-doer to Indra, dear the devout,
dear the zealous, dear the offerer of oblation."

(111) Divine Grace

देवाना भद्रा सुमतिर् ऋजूयता
देवाना रातिर अभि नो नि वर्तताम् ।
देवाना सख्यम् उप सेदिमा वय
देवा न आयुः प्र तिरन्तु जीवसे ॥
ऋ. १।८९।२

" May the blissful love of the righteous Gods
be ours,
the grace of Gods lie about us ;
The friendship of Gods we have sought,
may Gods extend our life so that we may live "

Note the sombre rhythm of the verses.

(112) Prayer without Ritual

The ritual is not essential to prayer People may pray in their minds at any time, anywhere

इन्द्र परे ऽ वरे मध्यमास
इन्द्र यान्तो ऽ वसितास इन्द्रम् ।
इन्द्रं क्षियन्त उत युध्यमाना
इन्द्र नरो वाजयन्तो हवन्ते ॥
ऋ. ४।२५।८

" The high and the low and the middling,
and men who are going, and men who are *returning*
—they pray to Indra.
Men who dwell at home, and men who are in battle
All men, *desiring power, pray to Indra*."

(113) Not by Ritual one attains God

नकिष्टं कर्मणा नशद्
यश् चकार सदावृधम्
इन्द्रं न यज्ञैर् विश्वगूर्तम् ऋभ्वसम्
अधृष्टं धृष्ण्वोजसम् ॥ ऋ. ८।७०।३

" None by action attains to Him who works and forever strengthens,
Not by sacrifice one attains to Indra, the praised of all, the irresistible, the valiant, the bold in might

(114) Knowledge above all

ऋचो अक्षरे परम व्योमन्
यस्मिन् देवा अधि विश्वे निषेदुः ।
यस् तन्न वेद किम् ऋचा करिष्यति
य इत् तद् विदुस् त इमे समासते ॥ ऋ. १।१६४।३९

" The Eternal of the (Vedic) hymns—the supreme region in which all Shining Ones *exist*—
One who does not know that, what will he do with (Vedic) hymns? But those who have known that—they are perfect.

CORRIGENDA

Page	Line	Incorrect	Correct
ii	5	twenty four	twenty
xvii	1		(omit this line)
"	10	lfterature	literature
xxvii	1	Unitheism	Henotheism
"	16-17	We ..Unitheism	(omit this sentence)
xxxi	2	so	no
xxxiv	24	attitnde	attitude
xxxv	7	indentifying	identifying
"	10	THR	THE
xxxvii	9	shantam	santam
xLv	7	arya	aryo
"	9	VIII. 51.1	VIII. 51.9
"	24	synthetized	synthesized
xLvi	20	wno	who
xLviii	5	conception to	conception of
"	10	sence	sense
Li	2	Adhyaksha	Adhyaksham
Lii	3	तपे।	तपो
"	25	Deities]	Deities
Lvi	7	Samasantah	Shamsantah
"	25	bring	brings
Lviii	8	amanausha	amanusha
Lxii	7	krilavah	krilayah
"	12	be hold	the hold
	"	fundamentalst	fundamentals

Page	Line	Incorrect	Correct
Lxvi	3	सखाय	सखायो
,,	4	ऋ. १०।१०८।११	ऋ. १०।१०३।६
Lxvii	14	be,	be
Lxix	17	nation.	nation,
Lxxv	26	Sakhaya	Sakhyaya
Lxxvi	11	biginning	beginning
Lxxix	9	Verna	Varna
,,	13	life	life,
Lxxx	10	Truth	Truth,
,,	10	spirit	spirit,
Lxxxii	5	or offering	of offering
Lxxxiii	3	Sombitas	Sambitas
Lxxxv	1	Yajna, is taken	Yajna is taken,
Lxxxvi	22	पितृर्	पितृष्
,,	24	८।१३।४	८।३।२४
xcvi	9	quaified	qualified
xcvii	8	XIX	IX

Page	Line	Incorrect	Correct
5	9	मडिता	मर्डिता
,,	17	,,	,,
7	12	Agni	Soma
8	last	देवताः	देवा.
34	7	पितर इव	पुत्रायेव पितरा

Page	Line	Incorrect	Correct
166	13	क्रुध्देम	क्रुध्दयेम
,,	19	घेहि	धेहि
167	9	चत्तु	चक्षुर्
168	3	शंभुं	शंभु
169	7	पिशाणि	पिन्याणि
,,	11	१।११।१०	१।७१।१०
171	4	भू	भूर्
,,	18	तनवाय	तनयाय
172	17	६।६१।३	६।६९।३
,,	3	युदी	युदां
173	last	then	their
174	2	दघातन	ददातन
,,	16	अरिष्ट	अरिष्टं
175	2	इन्द्र	एन्द्र
,,	3	सबाजिद्	सत्राजिद्
,,	3	१३१	२३१
176	7	१।१६।१८	१।२६।१४
,,	15	अनवीमान्	अनमीवान्
181	10	१०।१५३।१	१०।१५७।१
,,	last	न मेम न भमिष्येउमस्य	न मेम मा भामिष्योअस्य
182	22	उाविभिः	ऊविभिः

Page	Line	Incorrect	Correct
183	9	र्निश्चिविर्	निश्चिविर्
,,	10	१०।६९।२	१०।५९।२
,,	21	शुश्रूयान	शुश्रूयाम
187	13	पुर	पूर
190	11	११।८९।१	२।१८९।१
194	7	यदि	यदीं
208	last	६।७७।३.	६।७५।३
209	16	१।३।२	१।७३।२
210	after 17		(insert) अ. ३।३
217	22	विरयपु	विरयेपु
,,	23	रोचम्	रुचम्
219	3	सत्य'	सत्यो
220	7	स्वराड्	स्वराड्
,,	24	९।२९	९।२८
222	23	विष्ठ	विष्ठा
234	4	८।६७।७	८।६५।७
237	16	In	On
241	23	गातुविद	गातुविदं
243	9	२।१९३।४	३।१९३।४
244	26	४।२५५	४।२५।५
